

Inspection of a good school: Southfields Academy

333 Merton Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 5JU

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 February 2023

Outcome

Southfields Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Teachers know their pupils well. Pupils and their families appreciate this happy and welcoming school. Pupils are safe here. Pupils behave calmly and sensibly in lessons and around the school. They are respectful to each other and to their teachers. Pupils and sixth-form students said that bullying is rare. It is sorted out by staff if it does occur. Staff deal with any incidences swiftly, and pupils trust them to do so.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, and plan the curriculum carefully. All pupils have a broad range of courses to study. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum content is well organised, and taught by staff who have strong subject knowledge.

Pupils enjoy taking part in extra-curricular clubs and activities, including coding club and many sports and music events. Leaders take care to organise these so that many pupils are able to attend. Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe online. Typically, pupils said that there is always someone in the school they can go to if they need to talk. Staff are proud to work in the school and feel well supported by leaders.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. However, few pupils study modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11, which limits the proportion of pupils who achieve the English Baccalaureate by the end of Year 11. Content in nearly all subjects has been carefully sequenced and is broken down into manageable chunks. For example, in geography, pupils are taught about the weather in Year 7, which is revisited in Year 9 when they study how tropical storms can impact people and their communities. Similarly, in English, teaching gradually prepares pupils to read more complex texts, from the beginning of Year 7. Pupils benefit from a very clear structure to their lessons and from teachers who are enthusiastic about their subjects. Teachers regularly check pupils'

understanding. They quickly identify any misconceptions so that pupils' mistakes can be rectified promptly.

Teachers get pupils to revisit routinely what they learned previously so that key knowledge becomes embedded in their long-term memory. Sometimes, the tasks that teachers have designed to do this are not as effective, and pupils do not remember and recall their earlier learning as securely as intended.

Teachers receive clear information from leaders about pupils with SEND, so that staff can meet their needs in the classroom. Pupils who receive additional support, including those who attend the specially resourced provision, access the same curriculum as their peers. Reading is prioritised across the school. Younger pupils follow a reading scheme which builds up their confidence. Teachers have recently been trained to help any pupils who are not as fluent with their reading to catch up.

The sixth form has an extensive range of courses on offer, which cater for students at Southfields and those who join the sixth form from other schools in the local area. Students in the sixth form said that they felt very well supported. Careers guidance in all years is carefully planned. Students are successful in gaining entry to a wide variety of destinations, including university, apprenticeships or employment.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. They have carefully thought about how to meet the needs of some pupils who need more support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils and staff value the whole-school 'clear and fair' approach to promoting good behaviour. Pupils are taught that discriminatory language is not acceptable. Leaders recognise the importance of regular attendance and are persistent in working with families who need support to send their children into school every day. Pupils value the daily breakfast club, which is well attended. A carefully thought-out programme of personal, social, health and economic education teaches pupils important life skills.

Leaders make full use of their strong partnerships with other local schools and other partners in the local area to promote pupils' safety and well-being. The governing body shares leaders' ambitions for all pupils. It challenges the school's leaders to improve the school's work further and support all staff, including in managing their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns. A highly trained safeguarding team ensures that any concerns about pupils' welfare are acted on in a timely way. Leaders show tenacity in putting appropriate support in place for vulnerable pupils. They work effectively with external agencies. Pre-employment checks are thorough. Governors provide robust oversight of the school's safeguarding responsibilities. Pupils feel safe in school, and talk to staff about any concerns they may have.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, strategies designed to help pupils to memorise and recall previous learning are not well selected. This means that, sometimes, pupils are not helped to remember subject content that they have previously covered. Leaders should ensure that pupils are helped to build secure knowledge and understanding in all subjects in order to be ready to tackle more challenging ideas and content.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138682
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10255443
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,321
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	396
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Hayday
Chair of governing body	Sian Tyler
Headteacher	Wanda Golinska (Headteacher) Jacqueline Valin (Chief Executive Officer)
Website	www.southfieldsacademy.com/
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Southfields Academy is a larger-than-average secondary school, which is a member of Southfields Multi-Academy Trust.
- At the time of inspection, no pupils attended registered alternative providers.
- The school has specially resourced provision for up to 44 pupils with SEND who have hearing impairment and speech, language and communication needs.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, computer science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors visited assemblies and tutor times and observed pupils at breaktimes and in the school canteen.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders and members of staff, including early career teachers, as well as a range of pupils.
- The lead inspector listened to a group of pupils from Years 7 and 8 read.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- The lead inspector met with the governing body and trustees, including the chair of the academy trust.
- The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, students and staff.

Inspection team

Susan Maguire, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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