

# Inspection of South Bromsgrove High

Charford Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 3NL

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

South Bromsgrove High school leaders and pupils share the same high aspirations. Pupils understand and follow the school values to be respectful, resilient, honest and hardworking. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and courteous. The sixth-form provision enables students to achieve exceptionally well. Students in the sixth form also support many areas of school life, including younger pupils' learning and as leaders of house competitions.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils say they can focus on their learning well. Most pupils work hard and want to do well. In a few subjects, pupils can lose interest and concentration. However, teachers act quickly and efficiently to address any behaviour issues that arise. This, along with the well-thought-out curriculum, enables pupils to achieve well.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. Pupils regularly take part in a range of clubs, such as debating, yoga and cross-country. Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), participate in activities. These include the design and upkeep of the school garden. Significantly high numbers of pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils say the Eisteddfod and house competitions are exceptionally well supported. They are the highlights of the year.

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

Senior leaders, and trustees, know their school very well. They act with determination to improve any aspects that do not meet their very high expectations. They have implemented a well-thought-out professional development programme for staff and have ensured that there are opportunities for staff to collaborate. Staff feel very well supported and they are consulted about policy changes. Trustees are well informed about the curriculum. They both support and hold leaders to account for the decisions taken extremely well.

Students in the sixth form are exceptionally positive about their learning experiences and the wider opportunities the school provides. Skilled sixth-form teachers engage students in ambitious, challenging and independent learning. This enables students to achieve very well. Students make a significant contribution to supporting younger pupils, for example helping with their reading. Other students support learning in Years 9 to 11 as 'teaching assistants'. One student said they wanted to do this role 'to give something back to the school'. Many students become sixth-form ambassadors. These ambassadors support leaders in shaping the school community. For example, students lead their house across all competitions.

Leaders engage effectively with their feeder middle schools to extend learning from Year 8 into the pupils' first year at the high school. Year 9 pupils study a broad range of subjects in preparation for their GCSE choices.

Curriculum leaders identify the key knowledge that pupils need to learn to build future knowledge. For example, Year 12 art students use their knowledge of press-printing, from Years 10 and 11, to develop current projects around artists' work or 'personal investigation'. Most teachers check what pupils know well and ensure that pupils understand what they have to do. However, some pupils in Year 9 are not clear about how teachers assess their work and what 'grades' mean. Leaders accept there is some inconsistency across different subjects and have plans to address any misunderstandings.

Leaders quickly identify pupils with SEND. 'Pupil information sheets' provide useful information for staff about pupils' individual needs. Teachers use this information effectively to adapt their teaching. Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as other pupils. For pupils needing support in reading or mathematics, specialist staff adapt their learning well. However, both pupils with SEND, and disadvantaged pupils, miss too much time from school, compared with other pupils. This leads to gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders have implemented an extensive range of strategies to support pupils who are not confident readers. These include sixth-form student reading mentors and specialist teachers who rapidly address weaknesses in phonics, grammar and comprehension. Leaders continue to ensure that those pupils who need reading support receive it rapidly.

Most pupils' behaviour and attitudes are respectful and positive. Inappropriate language and behaviour are rarely heard or seen. Pupils say that derogatory language is uncommon and dealt with quickly by leaders if it does happen. For some pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, there are some instances where their behaviour is below expectations compared with other pupils. Leaders are aware of this and are developing support for all pupils to ensure that unwanted behaviours reduce.

Pupils' well-being is at the forefront of leaders' vision, including pupils' mental health. Leaders, and trained sixth-form students, actively engage with pupils who need support. Pupil well-being ambassadors are visible around school. Pupils say they welcome the help they receive. Leaders have a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, democracy and online safety. All students receive unbiased information on potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance. Pupils and students in the sixth form discuss careers, university aspirations and apprenticeships. This prepares them well for the next stages of their lives.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is exceptionally well embedded in the culture of the school. Leaders are visible in person and their photos are on display around the school. Leaders

know the pupils and their local context exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to plan support and help for pupils and their families quickly. External agencies are contacted where early help is required. All staff are proactive in reporting any concerns. Staff receive extensive training which is updated throughout the year.

Pupils say they know who to talk to and how they can report any concerns they have. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In Year 9, teachers do not use assessments consistently or effectively, to check and feed back on what pupils know and can remember. This means that some pupils in Year 9 do not understand what the feedback from teachers means and what they have to do to improve. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use a consistent and effective approach to assessment to regularly check what pupils have learned and to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Some pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils miss too much school compared with their peers. This holds back their progress and achievement. Leaders should work closely with parents and carers and external agencies to secure more regular attendance for all pupils.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140292
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267983
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,341
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mrs Alyson Jewson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Smith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.southbromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk">www.southbromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	23 and 24 October 2012

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school makes use of three registered alternative providers.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 focused on the following deep dives: art, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- They also looked at other subjects to check the curriculum and how these subjects are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also looked at how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders, teachers, including early careers teachers, students and pupils. They also talked informally to students, pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Stewart Tait	Ofsted Inspector

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