

Inspection of Southfield School for Girls

Lewis Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 6HE

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils come to school in a safe, focused environment where expectations are high. They have positive relationships with staff who know them well. Through the enrichment programme, every pupil benefits from a rich set of experiences. This means pupils try things they would not otherwise try. As one group of pupils agreed, they are pushed out of their 'comfort zone' and are surprised by what they enjoy and achieve. As a result, pupils develop resilience, confidence and optimism.

The school expects pupils to behave well. Pupils know what is expected of them and the vast majority behave very well. They are polite, welcoming and kind. A small number of pupils disrupt learning or are unkind to others. The school takes firm action to tackle this. Pupils said bullying sometimes happens. They report it and adults deal with it seriously.

Pupils study a wide range of subjects. This is because the school wants them to have lots of options for future study or work. Students in the sixth form benefit from very strong provision that prepares them well for their next steps. They contribute significantly to the school community.

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

Leaders prioritise reading, academic progress and pupils' character development. These are at the heart of the curriculum they have designed. Subject leaders and teachers have put time and thought into deciding what to teach and when. They use what they learn from assessments to refine the curriculum. As a result, pupils' learning builds on secure foundations at each stage.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This is especially evident in the sixth form. Teachers use this knowledge to give clear explanations. They choose tasks that help pupils to learn and apply knowledge and concepts. Teachers model how pupils should approach their work, and check pupils' understanding. In key stage 5, students benefit from clear, effective feedback that helps them to develop their learning. This is not always the case in the younger years. Pupils miss out on the chance to deepen their understanding or improve the quality of their work.

In the sixth form, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive academically. This is not yet consistently the case for pupils with SEND throughout the school. However, provision is improving. Leaders have put in place training and systems to strengthen the way that teachers meet pupils' needs in lessons. Most teachers adapt lessons to ensure all pupils can successfully access learning and achieve well. Leaders recognise that the approach to identifying pupils' needs must improve. They have already begun the work to ensure this happens.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning. Most work hard and want to do well. They respond well to staff. However, sometimes, staff do not make sure pupils meet behaviour expectations consistently. Leaders are taking firm action to challenge pockets of poor behaviour and secure high standards across the school. Pupils attend well, including in the sixth form. Pupils who need it get help to improve their

behaviour or attendance, including vulnerable pupils. Leaders are taking effective steps to develop further their anti-bullying work. They have strong systems for hearing pupils' views about the school. Leaders listen and make changes in response to what pupils tell them.

The provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Every pupil participates in weekly enrichment designed to give them the qualities they need to flourish in life. Pupils look forward to the weekly cultural, creative and physical activities. Through the carefully designed 'healthy living' curriculum, pupils gain the knowledge and understanding they need to stay safe and well. They are well equipped for life in modern Britain. Pupils value the high-quality careers education and guidance that leaders provide.

Students in the sixth form learn about the world of work from visiting speakers. They engage well with work experience and take advantage of the opportunities the school gives them to develop leadership skills. Pupils in Year 7 said how much they valued the way sixth-form students supported them when they started school.

Governors and trustees know the school well. Along with school leaders, they have set a clear, ambitious vision for the school. Leaders consider staff's well-being and workload. They prioritise professional development. Staff in all roles have the chance to undertake training to develop their knowledge and skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of safeguarding at this school. Leaders provide high-quality training and updates for staff. Staff value this training. They know their duties well.

Leaders of safeguarding bring considerable experience to their work. They ensure that staff take timely action to respond to any concerns raised about a pupil. Leaders work closely with external agencies to make sure pupils get the help and support they need.

Pupils learn to keep themselves and others safe, including when online. They develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders recognise that the provision for pupils with SEND needs to improve. Pupils do not benefit from consistently effective support. Leaders have detailed plans to address this and have already begun to take effective action. They must make sure that staff identify pupils' needs and provide consistently effective support for pupils.
- Teachers do not always give pupils quality or timely feedback on their work. Pupils repeat errors or do not have the opportunity to improve their work.

Leaders must ensure that teachers prioritise feedback that addresses any misconceptions promptly and deepens pupils' understanding so that pupils produce consistently high-quality work.

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	136976
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254788
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1188
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	221
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Drake
Headteacher	Stephanie Roberts
Website	www.southfieldsch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 and 26 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Orbis Education Trust.
- The school uses the services of one registered alternative provider and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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 met with senior leaders, including the executive headteacher, the head of school, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. They met leaders of SEND and with trustees and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, French, history, mathematics, physical education 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.
- Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in a range of other subjects. An inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors visited form time and enrichment activities. They observed pupils around school.
- To review the arrangements for safeguarding inspectors met with leaders, reviewed records and documents, and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Aoife Galletly, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Carlile	Ofsted Inspector
Anna Crawte	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Shepherd	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Wood	Ofsted Inspector

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