

Inspection of Southlands High School

Clover Road, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 2NJ

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Paul Bousfield. The school is part of the Mosaic Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Neil Moore, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adrian Hardy.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is highly ambitious for pupils to achieve well. Pupils are increasingly benefiting from the improvements that the school has made to the quality of education that they receive. Pupils study a broad range of well-designed subject curriculums. However, pupils learn more effectively in some subjects than in others. This is because the curriculum is not delivered consistently well.

Most pupils understand the high expectations of conduct that the school has for them. Pupils said that behaviour in lessons has improved. They are friendly towards each other and said that they feel happy and safe in school. Pupils know that they can talk to staff if they have a problem. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils.

The school has strengthened its provision to support pupils' wider personal development. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate the range of opportunities on offer to them to develop their leadership skills.

Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the variety of extra-curricular activities to enhance their learning of the curriculum, including visits from external speakers. However, some pupils do not make the most of all that the school has to offer. Added to this, some pupils do not know all that they should about fundamental British values.

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

The school has taken quick and effective action to address the weaknesses in the curriculum. It has considered carefully what pupils need to learn and when this content should be taught. The school has ensured that subject curriculums set out clearly for staff the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. Added to the improvements to curriculum design, there is a wider range of option choices available for pupils in key stage 4. The number of pupils taking the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is increasing.

While teachers' subject knowledge is generally strong, there is an unevenness in how well the curriculum is delivered. In some cases, teachers do not choose the most appropriate methods to help pupils to learn the knowledge in the curriculum. Sometimes, the activities that teachers design do not help pupils to remember important information as well as they should.

The school has ensured that new assessment strategies enable teachers to know if pupils have learned what was intended. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and use this information to reshape future learning.

Teachers know pupils well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This supports teachers to identify the additional needs of pupils quickly and accurately. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils with SEND

can achieve. However, some teachers do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum consistently well to ensure that pupils with SEND understand the key points of their learning.

The school ensures that the weakest readers are identified swiftly and that these pupils receive appropriate support. However, some staff are in the early stages of knowing how to support weaker readers in their classrooms effectively. The school's strategies to raise the profile of reading across the school are in their infancy. It is too soon to gauge the effects of these strategies on pupils' fluency, comprehension and attitudes to reading. This means that some pupils do not access the wider curriculum easily. These pupils do not learn well.

The school has ensured that there is a clear behaviour system in place. Most staff use this well. Pupils behave well in lessons, and they are respectful to teachers and visitors.

The school has taken suitable action to address the barriers to some pupils' regular attendance, for example through increasing capacity in the attendance team. Some staff have also started to work with families to support them with getting their children to school. This is starting to improve pupils' rates of attendance overall. However, despite the school's efforts, some pupils, including some with SEND and some who are disadvantaged, do not attend school as often as they should.

The school has prioritised pupils' personal development. For instance, the school's personal, social and health education curriculum is well designed. Pupils learn about different religions. They know that they should be respectful to people who may be different to themselves. Pupils are taught about healthy relationships at an age-appropriate level. However, the life skills curriculum is not delivered consistently well. As a result, some pupils are underprepared for life in modern Britain.

The school ensures that pupils are well informed about their possible next steps. For example, pupils can attend events held by local employers, and education and training providers, to ensure they are well prepared to take their place in the world of work.

The school and the trust have identified and prioritised the correct areas for improvement across the school. For example, the school has appointed new staff in various positions. This has strengthened the school's capacity for improvement, and pupils and staff said that this is helping the school to be better. Staff told inspectors that they appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being when changes to policy and practice are introduced.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not delivered consistently well across subjects. In some subjects, teachers do not design activities that help pupils to learn the knowledge in the curriculum. This hinders some pupils from learning as well as they should. The school should ensure that teachers, in these subjects, are fully equipped to deliver the curriculum consistently well so that pupils know and remember important knowledge.
- Some pupils, including some who are disadvantaged and some with SEND, do not attend school often enough. These pupils miss out on important learning. The school should ensure that the strategies that it uses to improve rates of attendance across the school support these pupils to attend regularly.
- There is inconsistency in how well some teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum to support pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they should. The school should ensure that teachers are suitably trained to support pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers.
- Some staff lack the confidence and subject expertise necessary to help the weakest readers to learn to read fluently. This means that some pupils are not able to access the full curriculum and learn well. The school, and the trust, should ensure that staff know how to address this and have the resources to do so successfully.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143794
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10314049
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	953
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adrian Hardy
CEO of the trust	Neil Moore
Headteacher	Paul Bousfield
Website	www.southlands.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of three alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector met with the chair and the CEO of the trust, the chair and members of the local governing body, the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, mathematics, history, art and design, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors met with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors also scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited other lessons across the school.
- Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for alternative provision and SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour, bullying and attendance logs, as well as the curriculums and plans linked to personal development, careers education and extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils through Ofsted's online surveys.
- The views of pupils were considered through a range of inspection activities. Inspectors also spoke to a wide range of pupils in single-sex groups.

Inspection team

Dawn Platt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Holmes	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Johnson	Ofsted Inspector

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