

Inspection of South Wigston High School

St Thomas Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 4TA

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

The principal of this school is Lorna Chandler. This school is part of the Learning without Limits 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, John Henrys, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeffery Knight.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school has seen many positive changes in recent months. Pupils appreciate that they now benefit from an improved quality of education in many subjects. They recognise that behaviour is better than it was previously. Relationships between pupils and staff are also much more positive. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of the provision that have an impact on how effectively pupils learn.

Most pupils conduct themselves well. They enjoy the company of their peers and interact respectfully with staff. They know they must follow staff's instructions at the first time of asking. They understand the consequences for poor conduct. Pupils enjoy collecting reward points for demonstrating the school's values. They like being rewarded for being tidy or when they are 'caught being kind'.

Expectations of what pupils can achieve have increased. Pupils know that staff want them to work hard, although some pupils struggle to engage well enough with their learning. Pupils who attend the school's Phoenix Centre value the extra support they get with their studies. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not always given the right help. The number of vulnerable pupils who are often absent from school is also too high.

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

School and trust leaders share a keen determination to rapidly improve the provision. However, this is balanced with the need to prioritise the right things at the right time, so that these improvements are sustained. Therefore, while the school has improved since its previous inspection, there is more work to do.

The school provides pupils with a suitable environment for learning. Any disruptions in lessons are managed effectively. However, while most pupils want to learn, some lack belief in their abilities and are not committed fully to their studies. Extra support with behaviour for some pupils is helping to reduce the number of suspensions.

The curriculum has been well thought out in some subjects so that it is clear what pupils need to learn and when. However, in other subjects the curriculum is still in the process of being planned. In these subjects, key knowledge and vocabulary are not always identified precisely to ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently ambitious.

Most teachers are subject specialists. They present new information clearly to help pupils understand important ideas. They make consistent use of 'do now' tasks at the start of lessons to revisit previous content. Some teachers use questioning to deepen pupils' understanding effectively. However, they do not always identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and misconceptions before the learning moves on. As a result, pupils' recall of what they have learned varies. They do not always achieve as well as they could.

Improving the provision for pupils with SEND is a key priority. Some of these pupils are beginning to benefit from appropriate support. The 'nurture' groups in Years 7 and 8 are particularly effective. However, teachers are not always aware of the precise needs of pupils with SEND or how to meet them. They do not always adapt the curriculum well enough for these pupils. These pupils are absent from school more often than their peers.

Pupils benefit from daily opportunities to read with staff. The library is well stocked with suitable reading resources that pupils can peruse. Pupils who need extra support with their reading are beginning to get some help; however, this has only been arranged recently.

While the personal development curriculum is comprehensive, its implementation is inconsistent. Pupils know how to look after themselves and keep themselves safe. Strong community links are helping pupils to become responsible and active citizens. However, pupils' recall of different faiths and cultures and what it means to live in modern Britain is often superficial. Pupils benefit from good-quality careers education and guidance. Most pupils move on to suitable education or training when they leave school.

Most staff are excited to work at the school and feel well supported. Their morale is high. They appreciate the many opportunities that they have to develop their practice.

The school has improved its communication with parents and carers by, for instance, offering weekly drop-ins to discuss any issues. However, a minority of parents are unhappy about how the school responds to their concerns.

Guidance from the multi-academy trust has been fundamental to the school's improvement. Additional support has given the school the capacity to enhance resources and provide staff with essential training, including from external experts. Committed trustees and governors help leaders evaluate what is working well and what needs to get better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is planned and implemented, across different subjects and key stages. These inconsistencies mean that pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. The school must ensure that the curriculum is planned and delivered consistently well in every subject.

- Teachers do not always make appropriate adaptations for pupils with SEND. These pupils sometimes struggle to access a suitably ambitious curriculum. The school must make sure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to support each pupil with SEND so that these pupils can be successful.
- Curriculum leadership is developing. However, some curriculum leaders do not have a precise enough oversight of their areas of responsibility. These leaders are not always clear about what is working well and what needs to improve. The school needs to ensure that curriculum leaders have the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their roles effectively.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. These pupils miss out on learning important knowledge and on experiences to support their wider personal development. The school should continue to develop strategies that help all pupils attend school well.
- Some pupils' attitudes to learning are not always positive. Some pupils lack confidence in what they can achieve and in their ability to do well. They do not always engage as well as they should with their learning. The school needs to help all pupils develop their levels of resilience and their commitment to their studies.
- There are inconsistencies in how well the new personal development programme is being implemented. As a result, pupils' recall of important aspects such as fundamental British values or different faiths and cultures is variable. The school must ensure that all pupils benefit from an effective programme of personal development that prepares them well for adulthood.
- Some parents raise concerns about the quality of the provision. They do not think that the school takes their concerns into consideration. The school needs to ensure that parents are aware of the positive work that is taking place to improve the school and that parents share the school's high expectations for what the pupils can achieve.

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	137931
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10324140
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	825
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeffery Knight
CEO of the trust	John Henrys
Principal	Lorna Chandler
Website	www.southwigston.leics.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Learning without Limits Academy Trust.
- The school uses the services of three registered alternative provisions and nine unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the associate principal and other senior school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the board of trustees, a trustee and the chair of the local governing body. She also met with the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into the following subjects: English, design and technology, modern foreign languages and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, spoke with teachers and pupils, looked at samples of pupils' work and visited lessons. They also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of different year groups, including pupils with SEND. Inspectors spoke with pupils informally and observed their behaviour during social times.
- Inspectors visited the school's on-site provision, The Phoenix Centre. They also visited some tutor sessions and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors spoke on the telephone with representatives of six of the unregistered providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of Ofsted's staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, parents 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 a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and information about governance. Inspectors also considered information about pupils' attendance and behaviour and the wider curriculum.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Wilkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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