Inspection of Sheffield Springs Academy

Hurlfield Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S12 2SF

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Claire Cartledge. This school is part of United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christian Brodie.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils experience a culture that stresses the importance of positive relationships. They recognise the recent improvements in the school. The school has high expectations for their behaviour. Many pupils rise to these. Pupils show respect for each other. They feel safe in the school.

Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to learn about their local area. For example, pupils learn about the city's industrial heritage and recent actions to stimulate regeneration. Pupils explore these themes culturally in visits to the theatre.

The school has high expectations for pupil achievement. This is not currently reflected in recent outcomes in national tests. However, the school's actions to improve the curriculum are reflected in the much stronger impact on what current pupils know and remember.

Pupils benefit from high-quality careers guidance in the school. They are encouraged to explore a wide range of aspirations for their future employment. The school's careers programme supports pupils to move on to their chosen next step when they finish Year 11.

Pupils get involved in a wide range of clubs, including the 'Nebula' programme. Here, pupils develop interests in engineering through robotics, such as how this is used in medicine to restart a heart. These high-quality experiences ensure pupils enrich their learning beyond the curriculum.

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

The school has designed the curriculum so that pupils' knowledge builds step by step over time. The school has thought carefully about the vocabulary pupils need to know and makes sure that they learn this. Pupils revisit this key knowledge in lessons and this helps them remember it well. For example, in English Year 11 pupils learn to understand how concepts, such as 'patriarchy', inform their understanding of social structures in 'An Inspector Calls'.

The school effectively checks what pupils remember. Any gaps in knowledge are noted on 'precision seating plans'. These identify the exact area of help that pupils need to help them to progress. Strategies to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well established. For example, pupils are given help to build sentences in extended responses to more complex geography questions. Such tailored support helps pupils access the ambitious curriculum.

The recently developed 'The Blue Zone' gives all pupils dedicated time in every lesson to apply their learning to an independent task. This is still embedding. For many pupils, it is helping them develop vital examination skills. However, some pupils, particularly those with SEND, are not currently able to work independently without additional scaffolding or support.

Pupils enjoy daily opportunities to read. During tutor time, pupils read interesting texts that broaden their insights into important themes. For example, Year 8 pupils enjoy 'Noughts and Crosses' and Year 11 read 'The Hate U Give'. These texts are carefully selected to explore themes, such as racism. Pupils respect difference and have a mature understanding of these topics. Pupils also enjoy using the library during lunchtime to read their favourite books. The school identifies pupils who are at the early stages of reading. There is targeted support for these pupils, for example phonics catch-up classes. This help pupils to become accurate and fluent readers so they can access the ambitious curriculum.

Pupils benefit from a range of experiences to support their personal development. Pupils in Year 8 visit a local university. Pupils in Year 10, develop interview skills when meeting with local community employers. Pupils learn about risks such as knife crime. These varied experiences help prepare pupils for both the opportunities and challenges of aspects of life in modern Britain.

The school is relentless in its pursuit of securing high attendance for all pupils. Pupils who attend the school on a regular basis progress well. However, some pupils do not attend often enough, particularly those who are most disadvantaged. These pupils miss out on the increasingly positive education the school provides. As a result, the most disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, work together to ensure high school standards. Adults in the school commit to providing pupils with a positive school experience. They appreciate that their workload and well-being matter to leaders. A small number of parents and carers feel that the school does not engage with them enough. This means they do not feel as included in the school as they could be. The school recognises that this is an area they need to develop further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils cannot consistently apply their knowledge independently. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could, particularly pupils with SEND. The school should further refine strategies to enable pupils to learn well when working independently.
- Some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, have persistently high levels of absence. This means that pupils develop gaps in their knowledge that prevents them from accessing more complex ideas as they progress through the curriculum. This

affects their achievement in school. The school should further develop their work with pupils, parents and external agencies to improve the attendance for these pupils.

- Some parents have concerns that the school does not communicate with them effectively. This means that they do not feel listened to or as included in the life of the school as they would like. The school should develop communication strategies so that the school and parents work more closely together.

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	131896
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10346389
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1050
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christian Brodie
CEO of the trust	Sir Jon Coles
Principal	Claire Cartledge
Website	www.sheffieldsprings-academy.org
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of United Learning Trust.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider of education.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, vice principals and assistant principals of the school. They also met with other leaders from the trust over the course of the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and a director of the board of trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: design technology, English, geography, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also discussed the mathematics curriculum with the senior vice principal and assistant principal and looked at a sample of pupils' work in this subject.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; 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.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils through meetings held with them and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Andrew Gibbins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Zoe Comiskey	Ofsted Inspector
Dave Wadsworth	Ofsted Inspector
Dimitris Spiliotis	Ofsted Inspector
Nicky Crum	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024