

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Southgate School

Sussex Way, Cockfosters, Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 0BL

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 April 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Martin Lavelle. This school is part of Middlesex 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 (CEO), Ann Marie Mulkerins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gareth Jones.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Southgate School are happy, and they enjoy their learning. They like spending time with their friends, and there are strong working relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including looking after their physical and mental well-being. They know that staff in the 'Student Support Centre' and the 'Be Well Zones' are there to help them if they need it.

The school has exceptionally high expectations of every pupil. It has designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious and meets the needs of pupils in the school. Pupils learn the curriculum well and consistently achieve excellent outcomes at the end of Year 11. Students in the sixth form also perform well across a broad range of subjects. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education and training.

Pupils behave extremely well. They are motivated to collect achievement points and enjoy the many opportunities to celebrate their achievements, including the headteacher's awards assembly. In class, pupils focus on their learning, and disruptions are rare. Breaktimes are calm as pupils are sensible and manage their own behaviour well and with maturity.

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

Across subjects, including in the sixth form, the school has designed programmes of study

that are carefully sequenced to build on pupils' prior knowledge. For example, in English, pupils study Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' in Year 9. What they learn gives them the knowledge needed for their study of 'Macbeth' in key stage 4. The school, working together with the trust, has also developed teaching and learning principles that are consistently and purposefully applied to deepen pupils' knowledge. These include, for example, checking pupils' recall of prior learning and for gaps in knowledge or misconceptions. Teachers are specialists and know their subjects well. They use the most effective teaching strategies to deliver their curriculum. As a result, pupils learn the subject content securely and in depth.

Disadvantaged pupils also achieve extremely well. The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. It works closely with local schools to make sure it has the information it needs to support pupils as soon as they join the school. The SEND team ensures that it shares this information with teachers so they can adapt their lessons to meet the needs of the pupils in their class. Teachers do this skilfully so pupils with SEND achieve well, including in assessments at the end of Years 11 and 13. The school also has a sharp focus on reading. It assesses all pupils' reading when they join the school and puts support in place for those pupils who need it. This helps to ensure pupils can access the school's ambitious curriculum.

The school has robust systems in place to ensure pupils attend every day. In assemblies and in meetings with parents and carers, pastoral teams share a clear message about the implications of lost learning. The school does everything it can to make sure pupils are in school so they can benefit from all the opportunities on offer. As a result of this work, pupils' attendance is improving. Their attitudes to their studies are highly positive.

Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their lives beyond school. They follow a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education programme. For example, pupils learn important topics such as physical and mental health and relationships education. Pupils in the equality, diversity and inclusion group play an important role in ensuring that the school is a welcoming place for all. Pupils benefit from a wide range of educational visits and activities built into the curriculum. For example, pupils enjoy theatre trips in English or visits from Holocaust survivors in history. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is very well established. Large numbers of pupils are involved, including many who achieve the gold award. Pupils receive thorough and up-to-date careers guidance. Students in the sixth form benefit from a carefully planned programme to prepare them for life beyond school, whether at university, on an apprenticeship or in the world of work.

The school works collaboratively with the trust. This has ensured that it has significantly improved performance since the last inspection. Staff receive high-quality training. As a result, they are very skilled at delivering the school's curriculum. Staff benefit from working with trust colleagues, especially when sharing and learning from effective practice. Staff enjoy working at the school. They particularly appreciate how leaders have reduced workload and created flexible ways to work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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	142727
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10346010
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,409
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	242
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gareth Jones
CEO of the trust	Ann Marie Mulkerins
Headteacher	Martin Lavelle
Website	www.southgate.enfield.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Middlesex Learning Trust.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- 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

- 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 headteacher, the associate headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other senior leaders in the school. They also met with groups of staff and pupils and representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector also met with the CEO and members of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Janice Howkins

Ofsted Inspector

Yvonne Chisholm

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