



# South Charnwood High School

Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number    120247  
LEA                                Leicestershire

Inspection number            274290  
Inspection dates              8 – 9 March 2005  
Reporting inspector          Joan McKenna

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

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Type of School	Middle deemed secondary	School address	Broad Lane Markfield Leicestershire LE67 9TB
School category	Community	Telephone number	01530 242351
Age range of pupils	10 - 14	Fax number	01530 244258
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr Alan May
Number on roll	651	Headteacher	Mr Andrew Morris
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	June 1999		

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
10 - 14	March 2005	274290

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of South Charnwood High School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

South Charnwood High School caters for 651 girls and boys aged 10 to 14. There are more pupils from minority ethnic groups than average and the proportion of around ten percent speaking English as an additional language is high although most speak English fluently. There are fewer pupils than average that have special educational needs, although the proportion with statements is above average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils join South Charnwood from a variety of other schools at the start of Year 6. Assessments made shortly after the pupils start indicate that standards are below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

South Charnwood is a good school. Standards are high and pupils achieve well. The pupils have positive attitudes towards school. They behave sensibly and get on well with each other and their teachers. They are well taught and enjoy their learning, although the tasks set in some lessons do not always take account of the needs of different groups of pupils. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by a wide range of extra curricular activities. The pupils are supported and cared for well. There are secure systems in place for ensuring that pupils are kept safe and healthy. The pupils' work is assessed well in some departments, but it is not yet consistently good across all departments. Similarly, systems for tracking pupils' progress are not developed well enough. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is very effective and he is well supported by staff. All members of the school community are valued. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. It provides good value for money.

**Grade: 2**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

The school has improved well since its last inspection. Teaching has improved and standards have risen. The previous inspection issues relating to the curriculum, accommodation, pupils' personal development, monitoring and the governing body have all been addressed successfully.

**Grade: 2**

### **Capacity to improve**

There is good capacity to improve because the staff have a strong and shared determination to tackle weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and robust. It accurately identifies areas requiring development. The very good leadership of the headteacher and efficient mechanisms for management create a positive climate for change and development.

**Grade: 2**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

To raise standards even further, the school should ensure that there is a consistent approach to:

- assessment, the analysis of data and tracking of pupils' progress across all subjects;
- planning lessons which provide appropriate levels of challenge and support for all groups of pupils.

### **Achievement and standards**

Pupils achieve well and reach high standards by the time they leave the school. Pupils are only in the school for two terms before they take their Year 6 national tests. They make good progress in this time and the most recent results in English and mathematics show that standards are average, although a little lower in science. Test results in Year 9 are higher, and over the past two years have been at least above average in all three subjects, and consistently high in mathematics. These results compare very favourably with those from similar schools. The school is helping the pupils to make very good progress in these subjects. Pupils achieve well in other subjects, especially design technology and art.

Within this positive picture, there are variations in performance. There is no significant difference in attainment between the different ethnic groups within the school. However, the higher attaining pupils do not always reach the standards they are capable of. The difference in standards reached by girls and boys is narrowing in some subjects, but in others it is increasing. Pupils with learning difficulties make very good progress when they receive specialist support, but in lessons where support is not available this is not always the case, although they nevertheless achieve well overall. Such variations are recognised and action is being taken to improve the performance of all pupils.

#### **Grade: 2**

### **Personal development and well-being**

Pupils like coming to school as shown by their very good attendance.. Pupils enjoy lessons where they are actively involved such as art, design and technology and science. They also appreciate teaching which helps them to make very good progress, such as in mathematics. Relationships are good and this is shown by the good behaviour and positive attitudes in most lessons. Older pupils feel well prepared for the next stage of their education.

A comprehensive citizenship programme, together with a rich programme of out of school activities, underpins the pupils' very good moral, social and cultural development. Pupils willingly exercise responsibility and help others, such as Year 9 pupils helping Year 6 pupils settle into school. Pupils take part in many fund raising events and help to decide which charities will benefit. Opportunities for spiritual development are relatively weaker and there is no daily act of worship.

This is a caring school which strongly promotes pupils' welfare and as a result pupils feel well cared for. They are developing a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They take opportunities to express their views. For example, a school council meets regularly to talk about issues pupils have raised, such as healthy eating. Not all tutor groups are regularly represented at these meetings. This deprives some pupils of opportunities to put forward points for discussion and get direct feedback on decisions, although minutes of meetings are circulated to all tutor groups.

**Grade: 2**

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

Most teaching is good, some is outstanding but a small proportion has inadequacies. In the best lessons where activities are well prepared and closely matched to the pupils' abilities, progress is good. Here, teachers foster very good relationships and encourage pupils to work hard and take pride in their work. Pupils have a real enthusiasm for learning and become very involved in lessons. In an English lesson with Year 6 pupils, for example, the teacher presented the start of a story, deliberately written to be uninteresting, and she invited pupils offer constructive criticism to improving it. The pupils did this with relish. In so doing, the pupils developed a very good understanding of how to make their own stories better as was evident in the high quality writing they produced. Teachers make good use of resources such as computers and interactive whiteboards to enhance and develop pupils' understanding. Some teachers skilfully use information from assessing pupils' progress to plan their lessons but this is not consistent throughout the school. However, very good use is made of detailed assessments of pupils with learning difficulties to ensure that the specialist support provided for them is effective. Where teaching is not helping pupils to learn enough it is because of inadequate behaviour management and because tasks are too easy or too hard for the pupils.

**Grade: 2**

## **Curriculum and other activities**

The curriculum is good and it supports pupils' learning well. Statutory requirements are met and national initiatives, such as in literacy, numeracy and science, are reflected well in lessons. The recent review of the curriculum and the organisation of the school day have resulted in a good balance of time across subjects for pupils of all ages. Subjects are generally well planned and matched to the National Curriculum. However some planning concentrates more on what teachers will be doing rather than what and how different groups of pupils should be learning.

Extra curricular activities are well attended by pupils and these, together with specific days on citizenship and personal development, enhance the curriculum considerably. Cultural diversity is tackled well through, for example, courses in music and design and technology. The use of form time is not always effective.

**Grade: 2**

## **Care, guidance and support**

There is strong concern for pupils' well being and teachers ensure that pupils are healthy and safe. There are good procedures for health and safety and child protection. The school regularly reviews its anti bullying policy, with clear information provided for pupils, parents and teachers. There is an effective induction programme so that tutors get to know the Year 6 pupils well from the start. Good pastoral care for pupils continues as they move through the school because, where possible, heads of year and tutors stay with their groups.

The school acknowledges that it needs to improve the monitoring of pupils' academic progress. In mathematics and art and design progress is closely tracked and clear information is given to pupils on how well they are doing and how to improve their work. However this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Central systems for monitoring the progress of pupils are not yet in place. Pupils who are at risk of underachieving are identified annually and mentoring support is provided for them but such intervention does not take place frequently enough.

**Grade: 2**

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management of the school are good, with many very positive features. The headteacher is very committed to promoting high standards and high quality education for all pupils, both academically and personally. He

promotes this very effectively by giving a strong lead to the whole school community, setting high expectations of professional conduct for staff, and of work and behaviour for pupils. He enables other leaders to be effective by ensuring that their role is well defined and that structures for efficient management are in place. He values their contributions and provides support through professional development. As a result staff morale is high, there is good teamwork and a strong sense of shared purpose. This results in a climate in which staff and pupils alike feel that they are important and show a strong commitment to the school.

The headteacher has a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas requiring development and the school's self evaluation reflected the practice seen during the inspection. Some middle managers are very effective, most notably in mathematics and art and design technology where standards are particularly high. However in other subjects this is not always the case because there is not always a clear and precise view of what needs improving.

Governors are very committed to the school and support it well. They are aware of their responsibility to hold it to account and do this in a variety of appropriate ways, including visiting lessons and examining test results. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses and have produced a development plan for promoting improvement, but not all areas that could be improved are known to them. The requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is not met.

Resources are managed effectively. Some parts of the building have been improved to provide a very good standard of accommodation and through prudent financial planning more redevelopment is planned. High standards are achieved by pupils despite below average funding when compared with other middle schools; the school provides good value for money.

**Grade: 2**



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