

South Charnwood High School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	120247
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313562
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	10–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	656
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan May
Headteacher	Andrew Morris
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2005
School address	Broad Lane Markfield LE67 9TB
Telephone number	01530 242351
Fax number	01530 244258

Age group	10-14
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

South Charnwood High School is a middle deemed secondary school in an isolated rural area. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. Pupils transfer to the school at the beginning of Year 6, mainly from four primary schools. The majority of pupils transfer to two upper schools at the end of Year 9. The school achieved Investor in People status in December 2006 and it was awarded Healthy Schools accreditation in February 2008. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Fewer pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

South Charnwood High School is a good school with many outstanding features. It is characterised by its harmonious atmosphere in which pupils feel valued, happy and safe. The school is committed to ensuring it provides the right ingredients to secure excellent personal development for the youngsters in its care. Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard and they appreciate its commitment to developing well-rounded individuals. One parent commented, 'My child looks forward to going to school and enjoys it.' The ethos of mutual respect and trust pervades all of the activities in the school.

Pupils enter the school with standards that are just below those expected for their age. When they leave to join the upper school, standards are above the national average. Within this, there is some variation and so this represents good progress overall. Progress in some areas, for example mathematics, and art, design and technology, is outstanding. However, progress is satisfactory in Year 6. This is improving and the school is working hard to iron out these inconsistencies to ensure progress is consistently good or better across the school. Pupils have high expectations of themselves because teachers set them challenging targets and engage them in interesting lessons.

Teachers know pupils very well and make consistent efforts to address their personal needs. As a result, pupils leave the school as happy, confident citizens ready to take their next steps in education. The school makes excellent use of outside agencies to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties at home or within the school. Pupils speak warmly about the trusting relationships they have with their teachers. Older pupils have the opportunity to become peer counsellors for younger pupils. They report that they feel extremely safe in school and know they can always find someone to turn to if they need help. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. They are highly aware of their role as global citizens and their responsibilities to the community. For example, the 'Leos' club meets regularly to raise money for charity.

Teaching and learning in the school are good with much that is outstanding. A minority of teaching is satisfactory and this is steadily improving. Pupils learn best when teachers give them the opportunity to solve problems independently and they are clear about the next steps they need to take to improve their work. However, the quality of guidance pupils receive through the day-to-day marking of their books is not yet of a consistently good standard. The school's priority is to ensure all teaching matches the quality of the best.

The outstanding curriculum reflects the ethos of the school in ensuring that pupils' needs are met by adjusting what it offers to suit individuals. There is an exemplary range of activities to support the most able pupils, those who are vulnerable and pupils who find learning more difficult.

The headteacher leads this buoyant and happy school with care and dedication. He, along with senior staff and governors, provides the school with clear direction. This results in teachers focusing on providing high quality learning experiences within and beyond the classroom. Middle leaders play an important role in monitoring the quality of the work of the school and some do this very well. The school is working to strengthen this good work by improving the analysis of its data on the progress of pupils. This will enable the school to become even more effective in identifying and addressing any underperformance. The school's capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the work on monitoring, evaluating and reviewing pupils' progress to ensure consistently good or better progress throughout the school.
- Ensure the day-to-day guidance pupils receive about the quality of their work and the next steps they should take to improve is consistently good or better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with standards that are slightly below the levels normally expected of pupils of this age. By the time they leave in Year 9, standards are above average and this represents good progress overall. In Year 6, pupils make steady progress and this accelerates as they move through Key Stage 3. In some areas, pupils make excellent progress, but there are some inconsistencies, particularly in Year 6. In the Year 6 national tests in 2007, pupils reached average standards in English and mathematics and a little lower in science. The school is aware of this and staff are working hard to ensure all learners make consistently good or better progress. Teachers set challenging targets to which pupils, including those who find learning more difficult, respond well, which promotes good achievement overall. Pupils make excellent progress in several subjects, for example mathematics. The school has been successful in maintaining high levels of achievement in Key Stage 3 since the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is, as pupils themselves say, 'a very nice place to be', which is why their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show great sensitivity and empathy towards the needs of others, and form very positive relationships. Their behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school, and they feel safe. Pupils really enjoy being at school, and this is reflected in their good attendance. They are welcoming, friendly and extremely courteous. They make good progress in the basic academic and personal skills that they will need for their future economic well-being. Pupils take full advantage of the good recreational facilities, which include a climbing wall and table tennis, and they are developing a good commitment to healthy eating. Their contribution to the community is outstanding and pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school. Many act as 'Cabinet Members' and peer counsellors, and they are clearly proud to be in a position to make the school an even better place for others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are confident, well organised and prepare active and engaging lessons. For example, in an exciting history lesson, the teacher used drama effectively to bring the Second World War to life for Year 9 pupils. In the most effective lessons, pupils have a clear idea of what they need to do to be successful. This clear focus on learning accelerates the progress that they make and pupils know exactly what to do to improve their work. Additional adults contribute well to the progress of pupils who find learning more difficult, both in the classroom and by providing extra support. Where teaching is less successful, teachers do not match tasks to suit the individual needs of pupils well enough. Consequently, there is a slower rate of progress.

Pupils' work is marked regularly and sometimes teachers make helpful comments that identify the next steps pupils should take to improve their work. However, this is not consistent practice and the school is working hard to make sure all teachers reach these high standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum and other activities combine to provide an outstanding level of provision that is challenging, stimulating and effectively meets the needs and interests of pupils. The school takes great care in ensuring that all teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills across the whole curriculum. In a joint project between the English and the information and communication technology departments, pupils were commended for their work in a national competition. The school makes impressive use of its links with other partners. For example, the art, design and technology department has developed close links with Loughborough University to give some pupils the opportunity to pursue a challenging electronics course. This has broadened pupils' learning and motivated them to work hard. The impressive range of sports activities and lunchtime clubs are popular and contribute much to pupils' enjoyment of school life and their well-being. Initiatives such as the highly successful sports leader programme in Year 9 contribute outstandingly well to pupils' positive attitudes and developing healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Teachers are very caring, and know pupils very well. This enables teachers to identify pupils who are falling behind with their work and to put good support in place. The support for pupils' personal development is outstanding. An example is the very many opportunities that the school gives pupils to mentor younger members of the community, to run clubs and generally support the work of the school. The behaviour policy works outstandingly well and contributes to the calm atmosphere in which all members of the school are courteous and caring towards each other. Procedures to safeguard pupils are rigorous. Pupils feel extremely well supported in school. They feel that the school is a very safe place to be and are very confident that adults will sort out any problems that they might have. One pupil aptly summed this up as 'it really feels just like being at home'.

The school has excellent procedures to help pupils settle into the school quickly. Pupils who find learning more difficult have a special programme and this supports them in making a good start to their time in school. The school has positive links with the upper schools and this ensures that pupils at the end of Year 9 are enthusiastic about their next steps in education.

Some teachers are highly skilled in helping pupils to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. The school is building on this good practice to ensure its consistency throughout the school. Pupils are set challenging targets. Subject areas and heads of year do good work in tracking pupils' progress and taking action where there is any underachievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported by senior staff and governors, provides a clear sense of direction and has high expectations for the school's further development. He has developed a positive ethos in which a strong team of adults offer pupils a high level of support and care. Everyone in the school knows that their views are valued. The governing body is well informed and governors challenge the school effectively. The school has taken effective steps to improve since the last inspection and it is constantly seeking new ways of improving the learning experience for pupils. As a result, the school's capacity to improve is good. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, the quality of teaching has been strengthened. Middle leaders offer support in checking the quality of the work of the school, sometimes very effectively but this is not always consistent. The school has good plans to strengthen the quality of its analysis of pupils' progress to ensure senior leaders have an accurate overview of the progress made in each year group. A strong feature of the school is the impressive work it does with its partners and this has resulted in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their high levels of enjoyment in their lessons and other activities. The school has made effective plans to ensure it maintains its success when a number of new key staff join the school next term.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Charnwood High School, Markfield, LE67 9TB

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed with how polite and courteous you are. You opened doors for us and for each other, and you greeted us with very friendly smiles. We thought your behaviour was excellent. You were very helpful in giving us your views about what it is like to go to South Charnwood High School.

You told us you were proud of your school. We understand that and agree you attend a good school. It makes sure your personal development is excellent and you make good academic progress. The way staff care for you is outstanding and this is one of the reasons why you make such good progress and some of you make excellent progress. You spoke warmly about your teachers and you told us how much you trust them. This is because you know they want you to do your best.

Your lessons are interesting and well organised to make sure everyone enjoys their learning. You learn best when you know exactly what to do to be successful. Some of your work is marked with helpful comments so that you know the next thing you need to do to improve your work. We have asked the headteacher to make sure all teachers mark your work this way to help you to make even better progress.

Staff make sure that the curriculum is exactly right for you. There are lots of clubs and activities for you and we were impressed with how many of you take part in them. You have some exciting courses to do and we watched some of you having fun and learning a lot when you were doing your Sports Leaders lesson.

Your school is led and managed well. Staff check how well you are making progress regularly and some of them do this very well. We have asked the headteacher to continue improving this and that will help you to keep doing the best you can.

Thank you once again for helping us to find out about your school. You can play your role in making South Charnwood High School an even better place to learn by continuing to work as hard as you can in every lesson and keep on looking after each other.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt Lead inspector

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Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt
Lead inspector