

Inspection of Southborough High School

Hook Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 5AS

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This school provides a caring and compassionate environment. Staff know individual pupils well and want the very best for them. Pupils enjoy coming to school and treat each other with respect. Behaviour is typically good, and incidences of bullying are rare. When bullying or disruption does occur, leaders are quick to intervene. This helps to ensure that pupils are kept safe at school.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and have created an inclusive offer, especially in the sixth form. Pupils follow a broad curriculum and achieve well. They also take part in a range of extra-curricular outings and activities. Pupils are encouraged to develop their leadership skills by becoming members of the student parliament. They are also supported to demonstrate active citizenship through participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Prefects are important role models and help with the running of extra-curricular activities. Pupils care for the local environment and have recently restored the school garden.

Leaders have prioritised supporting pupils' mental health. For example, 'Wellfest', a recent whole-school exhibition, enabled all pupils to hear a range of professionals speak on this important issue.

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

Leaders have ensured that all pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. Important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember has been identified in each subject. This has been carefully sequenced so that pupils embed their understanding before tackling more complex work. For instance, in geography, pupils in Year 7 learn about the features of erosion on the British coastline. They use this knowledge when comparing different types of erosion later on. Similarly, in English, older pupils engage confidently with complex ideas, such as the philosophy of Machiavelli and the representation of women during the Renaissance. This is because they have explored similar ideas through their earlier study of Shakespeare. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of development. As a result, some pupils have not secured the important knowledge that they need to tackle more complex concepts.

Teachers know their subjects and the curriculum well. This means that they present information clearly. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. As a result, any errors and misconceptions are swiftly identified and corrected. This ensures that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. Leaders have ensured that staff have received appropriate training and have the expertise to provide pupils with SEND with effective support. Where needed, additional help is put in place to ensure that pupils can keep up with the expectations of the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND are able to follow the

same curriculum as their peers. They are fully included in the wider life of the school, for example by participating in societies such as the eco club.

Reading is an important part of the curriculum. Many pupils read widely and for pleasure. Leaders have recently introduced support for those at an early stage of learning to read. This work is not fully embedded and, as a result, these pupils are not consistently receiving well-targeted support. Consequently, this is reducing how well pupils are gaining the knowledge and skills that they need to become confident, fluent readers.

In classrooms, pupils are calm and focused. While there can be some low-level disruption, teachers are quick to address this. Leaders and staff follow agreed procedures to promote positive attitudes to learning and pupils respond quickly to these reminders.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is coherent and well sequenced. This means that pupils revisit and embed their understanding of important issues such as healthy relationships. There is a comprehensive careers programme, which is supplemented by assemblies with visiting speakers and workshops with local businesses.

Pupils' personal development is supported through a range of extra-curricular activities, such as debating, chess, school productions and sports, including indoor athletics. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the local community, for example through charity weeks and food collections. Pupils have opportunity to develop their leadership skills through being part of the student parliament, or becoming prefects or mental health ambassadors.

The sixth form offers a wide range of courses. This reflects the highly inclusive culture and leaders' ambition to provide pathways for all students. Girls who join the mixed sixth form feel included in the school and supported by their peers. Sixth-form students play an active role in the school community, for example by running charity events and participating in friendship days with younger pupils.

Leaders support staff with their workload and well-being. Staff appreciate the opportunities that they have for ongoing professional development.

There is a skilled board of trustees who know the school well and support its strategic development effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and trustees ensure that there is a positive culture of safeguarding. The members of the dedicated safeguarding team are appropriately qualified. The team works closely with local agencies and external partners to secure extra help when pupils need it.

Leaders put in place regular training for staff to make sure that they are knowledgeable about safeguarding risks and school processes. As a result, staff know how to report their concerns and what to look for to keep pupils safe.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when online, and how to stay healthy. They know who to speak to if concerns arise and they feel safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some subjects is at earlier stage of development. In these areas, pupils have not consistently secured the knowledge that they need to tackle more demanding ideas that come later on in the curriculum. Leaders should support teachers to check that pupils' prior understanding of important concepts is well embedded.
- Some pupils at the earlier stages of reading do not receive sufficiently well targeted support. This affects the development of their reading accuracy and fluency. Leaders should implement and embed the planned catch-up programme for reading. They should ensure that these pupils receive consistently high quality support so that they learn to read well and can fully access the planned curriculum.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137917
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10255368
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	865
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	139
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Clare Henderson
Headteacher	Niall Smith
Website	www.southborough.kingston.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative education provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff.
- The lead inspector met with trustees and two school improvement partners.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, geography, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of their work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors held meeting with leaders responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements. They also looked at safeguarding records, including pre-employment checks for staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through both discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Olly Wimborne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Phillips	His Majesty's Inspector
Nigel Clemens	Ofsted Inspector
Christian Hicks	Ofsted Inspector

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