

Inspection of a good school: The South Wolds Academy & Sixth Form

Church Drive, Keyworth, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG12 5FF

Inspection dates:

4–5 December 2019

Outcome

The South Wolds Academy & Sixth Form continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school and attend well. They show respect and good manners when they speak with staff and to each other. They behave well in lessons and during breaktimes. Pupils told us they feel safe in school and well supported by the adults who teach and look after them.

Pupils achieve well within a culture of high ambition. Pupils receive careers education, meet with employers and visit universities. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and employment. Many sixth-form students go on to universities.

Pupils take part in many exciting activities during and after school. They participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme and visits to France and Germany. Pupils enjoy sporting activities, such as 'goals for life', dance festivals and the school pantomime. They run an 'eco club' to raise awareness of environmental issues across the school.

The headteacher recently introduced a new behaviour policy. Pupils and teachers say that behaviour has improved. There is a calm and productive atmosphere in lessons. Pupils work together well. They support each other's learning. We saw pupils sharing resources, and debating maturely. Pupils say that teachers deal with any bullying and poor behaviour immediately.

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

Leaders are passionate that all pupils do as well as possible. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils live up to these expectations. Pupils study a wide range of academic, creative and other subjects across all key stages.

Leaders have written detailed curriculum plans in some subjects. This includes modern foreign languages, physical education (PE), and art. The plans make it clear exactly what teachers must teach and the order in which they must teach it. For most pupils, this works well to help them build on their prior knowledge.

Teachers use different ways to check pupils' understanding. In some subjects, these checks are highly effective. For example, most teachers use question and answer sessions to confirm what pupils have learned. As a result, they understand what pupils know and can recall before moving them on to what they need to learn next.

Leaders know that some subject plans are more precisely mapped out than others. Mathematics and geography leaders have worked together to improve the curriculum plans in these subjects. In science and design technology, leaders have not made it clear what pupils must know and remember. Pupils do not learn some important knowledge well enough. They sometimes forget what has been taught. The trust provides some support to improve the curriculum for science, but this is in the early stages.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not learn well enough across some subjects. Teachers do not always adapt the curriculum well enough for pupils with SEND. As a result, some of these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to broaden their experiences. This raises pupils' awareness of people and places beyond that of the local community. In many subjects, they learn about faiths and lifestyles that may be different to their own. We saw pupils celebrating diversity and difference during 'languages day'. Pupils told us that they learn how to look after their physical and mental health.

Teachers expect pupils to behave well and get on with their work. Pupils concentrate on their work and contribute to discussions. They listen well to their teachers and to the views of others.

Students in the sixth form are dedicated learners. They want to achieve their best. Students are strong ambassadors for the school. They use opportunities the school provides, such as the 'community sports leader' programme, to develop their leadership skills. Leaders ensure that pupils choose courses that are ambitious and meet their needs. Students told us that teachers support their learning effectively. For example, students described how they have developed their own research skills in mathematics.

Trustees play an active part in ensuring that every pupil achieves their best. Leaders are considerate of teachers' workload. Staff say that leaders listen to any concerns they have about their well-being and act upon them quickly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding systems are clear and understood by staff. Pupils' safety is a high priority for all. Leaders and staff are well trained. They understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They are vigilant and respond quickly when a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report concerns about pupils' safety or welfare. Record-keeping is detailed and accurate.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe online and about the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse. The trust audits the school's safeguarding systems regularly to check that procedures remain effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. The strengths seen in art, modern foreign languages and PE are not matched in some other subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan the curriculum and train staff that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is clearly planned and sequenced in all subjects.
- The curriculum is not planned well enough to support the needs of all pupils with SEND in some subjects. These pupils do not always achieve what they are capable of. Leaders must ensure that staff adapt their teaching so that these pupils achieve their best in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, South Wolds Comprehensive School, to be good on 22 September 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	138191
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10110160
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	832
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	141
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Andrew Hindmarsh
Headteacher	Halina Angus
Website	www.southwolds.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2016

Information about this school

- The school is part of East Midlands Education Trust.
- The school uses one alternative provider. This is CP Riverside.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- We spoke with pupils about life at school and their work. We held meetings with senior leaders, governors and trustees.
- The inspection focused on English, mathematics, science and geography. We met with subject leaders, spoke with pupils, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teaching staff. A range of other subjects were also considered.

- We reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' curriculum plans. Bullying logs and information relating to pupils' behaviour were examined.
- We considered the views expressed by parents in the 116 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. We considered the 55 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 330 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- We reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff and the support provided for pupils.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Considine

Ofsted Inspector

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