

Inspection of South Wirral High School

Plymyard Avenue, Eastham, Wirral, Merseyside CH62 8EH

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

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 Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, feel happy and safe at South Wirral High School. They are proud of their school. They appreciate their peers' friendship and the support and care that they receive from staff.

Senior leaders have successfully raised teachers' expectations of what pupils and students can achieve. Leaders ensure that pupils and students benefit from more ambitious subject curriculums than previously. Pupils and students succeed in their learning.

Leaders have established high expectations of pupils' and students' behaviour. In lessons, the overwhelming majority of pupils and students behave very well. Classrooms are calm. Pupils and students listen carefully to their teachers and follow instructions quickly. Staff tackle any reported incidents of bullying swiftly and effectively.

The personal development curriculum provides pupils and students in the sixth form with plentiful opportunities to discuss topical issues relevant to their daily lives. This helps them to develop their confidence and resilience. Pupils and students also benefit from a wide range of clubs and activities. For instance, pupils spoke enthusiastically about the debating society, eco club, diversity club and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

Leaders and governors have an ambitious vision for the school. They have created a well-considered academic curriculum. Most subject curriculums are suitably challenging for pupils and students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have an appropriate strategy to increase the proportion of pupils who study the modern foreign languages element of the English Baccalaureate.

From key stage 3 and into the sixth form, leaders have carefully selected the most important subject content that pupils and students should know. Leaders have organised content so that pupils and students can learn new and increasingly complex concepts securely as they move through the curriculum.

Teachers are well trained. They have the appropriate knowledge and expertise to deliver subject curriculums skilfully. Using the 'South Wirral Way', teachers provide pupils and students with opportunities to revisit and consolidate what they already know. Teachers emphasise important aspects of learning, including essential vocabulary. They design learning activities that enable pupils and students to build up a rich body of knowledge. As a result, pupils and students achieve well.

For the most part, teachers use effective assessment strategies to check how well pupils and students know and remember important content. However, on occasion, some teachers do not act swiftly enough to identify and address pupils' misconceptions or knowledge deficits. This means that pupils and students sometimes move on to new learning too quickly. Occasionally, pupils and students do not recall some important knowledge with confidence or ease. This prevents pupils and students from connecting some new learning with prior learning.

Leaders have comprehensive systems in place to accurately identify the needs of pupils and students with SEND. Leaders provide teachers with the high-quality information that they need to appropriately support this group of pupils with their learning. That said, while staff have a secure understanding of these pupils' needs, a small number of teachers do not adapt their delivery of the curriculum sufficiently well to allow these pupils to learn as well as other pupils and students.

Leaders have strong systems in place to identify pupils who need help with their reading. Leaders carefully check the deficits that some pupils have in their phonics knowledge. These pupils receive swift and targeted support from staff. This helps them to catch up quickly. Eager to engage pupils in a love of reading, leaders have successfully introduced a range of initiatives. For example, 'book buzz' provides pupils with access to a wide range of engaging texts.

Pupils and students benefit from a strong personal development programme, including that for relationships and sex education and health education. They learn about important aspects such as puberty, crime and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils and students are respectful of other cultures and religions. They accept others' differences. The careers programme provides pupils and students with the knowledge that they need to make informed decisions around their next steps in education, employment and training.

During lessons, pupils and sixth-form students are attentive and behave very well. They are keen to learn. However, in social times, a very small minority of pupils do not always behave as sensibly as they should.

The school has strengthened its governance arrangements. Governors understand their statutory duties well. They carry them out diligently. They provide leaders with an appropriate balance of support and challenge.

Leaders are considerate of staff workload. Staff morale is high. They appreciate the steps that leaders have taken to support them with their health and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. The safeguarding team receives appropriate training to ensure that their knowledge of local and national

issues is up to date. Staff have a strong understanding of the potential risks that pupils and students may face in the local community.

Staff are confident in using the school's safeguarding systems. They know how to pass on any concerns quickly to leaders.

Pupils and students learn how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. For example, they learn about healthy relationships and sexual consent. Pupils and students feel able to get help if they have any worries or concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have sufficient expertise in checking whether pupils and students have learned the intended curriculum. As a result, they do not spot or address pupils' and students' mistakes and misconceptions quickly enough. Leaders must ensure that they provide staff with high-quality training on how to effectively check pupils' learning. This is so that teachers can ensure that pupils' learning is secure before they are introduced to new content.
- Some teachers do not have a full enough understanding of how to make best use of the information that they receive from leaders to support pupils and students with SEND. This hinders some pupils and students with SEND from taking full advantage of important new learning in lessons. Leaders should ensure that teachers are sufficiently well trained to use the information that they receive to adapt their delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

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	105107
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10244610
Type of school	Secondary modern (non-selective)
School category	Foundation
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	1053
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Barker
Headteacher	Simon Goodwin
Website	www.southwirral.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 April 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of five unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This is the second routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: art and design, English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed aspects of the curriculum in design and technology and computing.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also met with the school improvement partner.
- The lead inspector met virtually with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors considered the minutes of several governing body meetings. The lead inspector also spoke with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding procedures, including the recruitment checks made on new staff. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader, staff and pupils to discuss and evaluate the culture of safeguarding. They scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. They also considered survey responses from staff, parents and carers around safeguarding.
- An inspector also spoke with representatives from a selection of alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including that relating to the curriculum, pupil behaviour, attendance records, improvement plans and the self-evaluation summary.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils about behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. These included the comments submitted via Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Alyson Middlemass, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Hammersley	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Meldrum	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector

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