

Inspection of Southam College

Welsh Road West, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 0JW

Inspection dates: 15 to 16 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders' aspirations and ambitions for pupils at Southam College are of the highest order. This permeates the whole school. Pupils come to school knowing that they are expected to work hard and do their best. Staff demand that pupils behave well. Pupils are explicitly taught how the school rules and routines help them to learn. They rise to this challenge and realise this ambition.

Staff know their pupils well. They lead by example and model the school's values of kindness, confidence, and resilience at all times. Pupils embody these values. As a result, the school is an exceptionally trusting and caring community, founded on mutual respect for all.

Leaders organise an array of memorable experiences for pupils. These widen pupils' horizons and foster their interest in the wider world. Pupils enthusiastically take part in the many clubs and activities. They are encouraged to try new things. Staff go the extra mile to make sure that there is something to spark pupils' interests. Staff have been quick to restart these following the pandemic. School is a vibrant place to be.

Leaders know that bullying can happen. However, it is not tolerated. The school is a supportive and safe place to learn.

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

The headteacher and senior team lead the school exceptionally well. They have a strong moral purpose. Leaders set high standards for themselves, staff, and pupils. At the heart of this is an unwavering determination to provide every pupil with the very best educational experience. Staff have a collective pride and share leaders' vision.

Leaders have created an exceptionally high-quality curriculum that is ambitious for all. This applies to all key stages, including the sixth form. Subject leaders have the expert knowledge needed to do this effectively. Within each subject, leaders have carefully crafted the order in which pupils learn new things. There is a sharp focus on the detail of what pupils should learn and what they are working towards. Each lesson skilfully draws on what pupils have learned before, helping them to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Teachers are passionate advocates of their subjects. They use their subject expertise to bring these curriculum plans to life so that pupils excel. They select, create, adapt and review resources collaboratively that match the aims of the curriculum. This feeds into a cycle of continuous curriculum improvement. As a result, pupils develop a detailed knowledge of each subject. This is the case across subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as other pupils. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND have the structures and support in lessons so that they make strong progress.

Leaders have prioritised reading and literacy. Well-trained staff support pupils who are weak readers to improve their phonic knowledge. Pupils are encouraged and supported to read widely and often. For instance, pupils in Years 7 and 8 read and discuss challenging texts with their tutors. Subject leaders have had additional training on how they can promote literacy and reading within their curriculum plans. They have acted on this. The collective emphasis on reading is endemic across the school. Consequently, pupils read increasingly complex texts confidently in all their subjects.

The school's work to support pupils' personal and social development is excellent. All pupils, from Year 7 to Year 13, follow a rich and relevant character and culture curriculum. This is well planned and high quality. Pupils learn the right things at the right time to help them stay safe, both online and in the wider community. There is a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusivity. Pupils learn to respect others' needs, choices and beliefs and treat everyone equally. Leaders plan an abundance of enjoyable opportunities to support pupils' understanding of social and cultural issues. These range from bhangra dancing to visiting a local night shelter.

Leaders provide effective careers information, education, advice and guidance. They carefully audit this provision to make sure that is of a high quality. As a result, pupils in all years are knowledgeable about different careers and future study options. Pupils also have meaningful encounters with the world of work. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

The sixth form is an integral part of the school. The range of courses on offer is extensive. Leaders set a high bar for students' attendance, behaviour and attitudes. Students attend well, use their time wisely and work hard, gaining a deep knowledge in their subjects. However, student life in the sixth form is much more than simply academic study. For instance, all students join one of many sixth-form societies, from debating to football. They are very well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff are well trained and vigilant. They report any concerns about a pupil promptly and leaders swiftly follow these up. Leaders work with external agencies to make sure pupils and their families get effective support.

Leaders are not complacent about the risks and issues pupils may face in and out of school. Consequently, staff are alert to the signs of harassment, bullying or abuse and act quickly to support pupils affected.

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.

If you are the school and 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

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| Unique reference number | 143905 |
| Local authority | Warwickshire |
| Inspection number | 10199445 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| 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 | 1651 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 313 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Mrs Clare Chevassut |
| Headteacher | R Samra |
| Website | www.southamcollege.com/ |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Southam College converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, known by the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2014, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school makes use of four alternative providers for a very small number of pupils. This provision runs alongside provision in school.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for post-16 education. Inspectors held discussions with teachers, members of the governing body and the trustees of the multi-academy trust, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in philosophy and ethics, modern foreign languages, English, mathematics, history, art, psychology, and character and culture. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors also attended an assembly and visited form time.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups, and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. Inspectors also took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- An inspector visited the alternative provision at Positive Impact.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ian Tustian, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Sara Arkle | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ant Edkins | Ofsted Inspector |
| Julie Griffiths | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gwen Onyon | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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