

# Southmoor Academy

Ryhope Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 7TF

## Inspection dates

15–16 November 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Southmoor Academy is a good and improving school where pupils are achieving well.
- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. He is effectively assisted by leaders at all levels.
- There have been recent substantial improvements in the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and humanities.
- The difference in academic performance between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- Most pupils are keen to do well and behave well in lessons and around the school. Occasionally, some of the younger pupils lose focus in class, fidget and do not complete their work.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment enable all groups of pupils to progress well.
- Teachers deploy their skilled classroom assistants well to ensure that pupils with the greatest level of need are supported to make good progress
- There are several instances of teachers not challenging weak presentation of graphs and diagrams in mathematics. Some teachers do not ensure that pupils respond to their marking in accordance with school policy.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve well because they benefit from good-quality support.
- Good provision on the recently introduced 16 to 19 study programmes enables students to achieve well at A level. Courses are effectively led and managed, and welfare arrangements for students are good. Many students make successful applications to university.
- However, some students' independent study skills require further development. Support for those who do not do well enough at GCSE in mathematics has not been good enough.
- Pupils' attendance last year was around the national average. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities now attend more regularly.
- School development planning identifies the main areas that need to be improved, but it lacks easily measurable targets in relation to all groups of pupils' attainment and progress.
- School leaders and governors have an effective focus on the quality of education that the school provides, especially in relation to the quality of teaching, curriculum and pupils' outcomes.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - improving the quality of the school development plan through incorporating more easily measurable targets for attainment and progress of all groups, especially the disadvantaged.
- Improve teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that teachers reduce restlessness among some of the younger pupils and check that they complete their work
  - checking to make sure that pupils respond consistently to teachers' feedback in accordance with the school's marking and feedback policy
  - insisting that pupils produce consistently neat pencil diagrams and graph lines in mathematics.
- Further develop 16 to 19 study programmes by:
  - providing high-quality teaching for students without adequate GCSE results in mathematics
  - checking to ensure that all students are developing sufficient independent study skills to enable them to reach their full potential at A level.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The effective leadership of the headteacher, together with that provided by the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and senior and middle leaders has ensured that the school has improved. Achievement is rising and previous weaknesses in English, mathematics and humanities have been largely eliminated.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have very successfully established a very wide range of 16 to 19 study programmes at AS and A level. The introduction of these programmes has raised pupils' aspirations throughout the school and has provided a route to university that enables many students, especially the disadvantaged, to study successfully to a much higher level than previously.
- The school development plan has a high profile in the school, and rigorous checking of intended improvements ensures that the planned actions materialise. However, the plan does not contain easily measurable targets for pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school. This means that governors cannot see clearly enough which groups of pupils and subjects are doing well and where extra help is needed.
- Good leadership of teaching ensures that classroom practice improves. Classroom observations carried out by senior and middle leaders provide less experienced teachers with targets for improvement. The very enthusiastic younger and less experienced teachers really value the support that leaders provide. They are happy to be at the school and all play their part in ensuring that it becomes as good as it can be. Although improvements in some lessons are still necessary, the large majority are enabling pupils to progress well.
- Staff morale is very good. Most members of staff are proud to be connected with the school and recognise that it is improving quickly in response to leaders' greater expectations of the quality of teaching and pupils' higher attainment.
- Good welfare arrangements mean that equal opportunities are strongly encouraged. The school spends its pupil premium funding well in ensuring that differences in performance between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally continue to diminish. The success of this support can be seen through the disadvantaged pupils who benefit from the large array of extra-curricular activities and the considerable numbers who join the 16 to 19 study programmes after GCSE.
- Funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is spent effectively. The programme designed to support these pupils is managed well. Consequently, the pupils have the support they need and usually achieve well. Leaders can also point accurately to the successful use of Year 7 catch-up funding for those pupils who join the school with below-expected attainment in English or mathematics.
- In terms of the curriculum, leaders and governors have ensured that as many pupils as possible have the opportunity to enter for the English Baccalaureate in Years 10 and 11. The necessary studies at GCSE in English, mathematics, science, humanities and a modern language, coupled with their optional subjects, give pupils a good basis for entry to the 16 to 19 study programmes as long as they achieve suitable grades.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

plays an important role in helping to underpin their confidence building, often through new experiences and activities. Discussions about British values enable pupils to gain an increasing knowledge and understanding of topics such as democracy, parliament, tolerance and the rule of law. The curriculum, coupled with good teaching and the wide range of extra-curricular activities, is the major contributor to pupils' good progress and personal development.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and hold leaders to account effectively for pupils' results at GCSE and A level. They know what the school does well and where improvements are still necessary.
- They fully recognised, last year, that improvements were necessary in some subjects and supported leaders in the appointment of staff necessary to effect change.
- The governing body ensures that best use is made of financial resources and that performance management arrangements are carried out according to school policy so that all salary increases are fully merited.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because there are clear systems in place, which members of staff follow consistently. Leaders frequently check with parents, carers and pupils to ensure that there are no safety concerns.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they are perfectly safe in school and know that duty staff members are always on hand if they need help.
- Effective checking on the identities of all adults who have access to pupils is firmly embedded into the day-to-day running of the school. Records relating to the checking of all adults working in the school meet all requirements.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Good and improving teaching in response to the higher expectations of leaders is enabling pupils of all abilities to progress well in the subjects they study, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and on the 16 to 19 study programmes.
- The teaching of English, mathematics and humanities has improved substantially over the last year. Leaders realised that GCSE results in these areas were not high enough and made widespread changes in personnel until they were satisfied that the quality of teaching was at the level they expected.
- The changes have produced much-improved progress rates, especially in Years 10 and 11 where it is now quite common to find pupils working at levels consistent with the highest GCSE grades. In mathematics, teachers frequently arrange for pupils to study with higher year groups to provide further challenge. For example, some high-ability pupils in Year 9 work with Year 11 and some from Year 11 work with Year 13.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use skilful questioning to extend pupils' learning, develop skills and increase their understanding.
- Planning for lessons is detailed and draws on pupils' targets, previous test results and

the work the teachers have marked. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils act on the feedback they provide to help pupils improve their work.

- Leaders know exactly how pupils are getting on in all of the subjects they study because teachers supply them with accurate information each term on pupils' levels of attainment and the progress they are making.
- This assessment information is used effectively by leaders to identify groups of pupils who are not making the progress they should. Any underperforming groups are researched carefully and extra support provided where necessary.
- Typically, teachers and their assistants manage their classes well. They explain work clearly and usually use lesson time to the best advantage. They know when to stop, revise and clarify so pupils continue to develop their learning. Most lessons are conducted in a thoroughly calm and productive manner so pupils have time to think and work without distraction. There are, however, a few occasions in Years 7 to 9 when pupils lose concentration, begin to fidget and waste time. This is when their teachers allow them too much time to do their work.
- Teachers generally challenge their pupils effectively to set their work out well. Consequently, most pupils' work is logically sequenced and easy to follow. There are, however, occasions when teachers in mathematics are not insisting that graphs and diagrams are drawn with sufficient mathematical precision. For example, there are some poorly presented geometrical diagrams and graph lines drawn in ink instead of pencil. Occasionally, teachers accept poorly presented work in other subjects.
- Teachers use their skilled classroom assistants well to enable pupils with the greatest level of need to make good progress. Good planning for the least able pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities means that they are taught at the right level to enable them to progress well. Work is carefully matched to their needs, and they frequently benefit from learning in small groups. The teaching of pupils who have weak reading skills on entry to Year 7 is particularly effective. Many make extremely good progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from a wide-ranging educational programme that supports their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It provides them with a strong moral code, which enables them to differentiate between right and wrong. It raises their aspirations, making clear that routes towards professional employment are available in response to hard work and success in examinations.
- Through the morning tutor period, assembly and all of the subjects that they study, due weight is given to pupils' personal development. Pupils discuss a whole range of issues ranging from careers to bullying and sexual relationships. Many of these discussions take place in the tutor period when pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 study and discuss issues together. Sometimes, however, the approaches used for these mixed-age groups are not totally suitable for all the pupils.

- Pupils said that they really appreciate and enjoy the very wide range of extra-curricular activities that the school provides. There are more than 10 activities each day. They range from football, table tennis and netball to drama, chamber choir and art, crafts and computer games. These activities enable pupils to develop new skills, socialise and generally develop new interests and gain in confidence.
- Pupils and their parents appreciate the amount of help and guidance that the school provides. They know that there is help on hand in times of need. Effective levels of personal and academic support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities enable them to progress well. This support frequently enables them to flourish, when previously their development had been limited through disadvantaged personal circumstances.
- Good levels of supervision when pupils are arriving in the morning, leaving at the end of the school day, moving around the site and socialising at breaks or lunchtimes mean that pupils feel very secure because there is always a visible adult on hand. Pupils said that bullying is rare and that they have every confidence that members of staff would deal with it effectively if it should occur.
- The school takes all potential threats to pupils' welfare very seriously. Through tutor time and assembly, many topics are presented in a way that enables pupils to make their own welfare decisions about how to keep safe, especially in relation to dangers posed by alcohol, drugs and the internet if used unwisely.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well when they are moving around the site, socialising at break and having lunch. They are punctual arriving at school in the morning and to lessons. Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to explain how it has recently improved. They take a pride in their work, which is generally well presented, and take a pride in their appearance.
- Pupils are keen to learn and cooperate well in class with their teachers and classroom assistants whom they respect fully. They play their part in ensuring that classrooms are productive places where they can listen, answer questions and work without distraction.
- Occasionally, however, in Years 7 to 9 some pupils lose concentration and fidget. When pupils are restless, it causes the pace of learning in the class to decline because the teacher has to spend time dealing with their inattention. There are several instances of pupils not completing the work that has been set for them. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are consistently more mature and keen to do well at GCSE and, in many cases, continue into the 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Pupils confirmed that instances of bullying or generally unacceptable conduct are rare and that when they do occur members of staff are quick to deal with them effectively. Exclusions for poor conduct run at similar rates to national averages and are relatively infrequent.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly consistent with the national average. Persistent absence is also average. Over the last year, the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved substantially.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment is rising and rates of progress increasing in response to greater expectations of leaders in respect of what should, and can, be achieved. Progress in the previously underperforming subjects of English, mathematics and humanities is accelerating quickly.
- GCSE results in 2016 and 2017 compared favourably with the national picture in several respects. Attainment and overall progress rates across the curriculum were broadly consistent with national averages. More pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate than did so nationally and more were successful in gaining the qualification than did so nationally.
- The broadly average GCSE results did, however, mask quite a large variation of achievement across subjects. For example, pupils performed much better in science and modern languages than they did in English, mathematics and geography. In both years, there was a considerable difference between the progress and performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities gained GCSE results which were similar to those of other pupils nationally who had the same starting points in Year 7.
- Recent substantial improvements in provision for English, mathematics and humanities have had the effect that governors and leaders have sought. Pupils are now receiving good teaching across the curriculum so their progress is more even across the subjects that they study. Attainment in English, mathematics and humanities has risen quickly over the last year. Many more pupils are now reaching higher levels of attainment than previously.
- The current good progress that pupils are making is particularly evident in Years 10 and 11. The highest-ability pupils are reaching the top grades at GCSE. For example, in mathematics in Year 11, higher-ability pupils are confident with topics such as the relationships between parabolic graphs and factorised quadratic algebraic expressions. In English, higher-ability pupils express themselves very well orally and write accurately at length for a variety of audiences.
- Data from the school's tracking and assessment procedures is consistent with the progress being made in the classroom. It indicates that the differences in performance between the disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing effectively.
- The school's work to develop pupils' reading is good. Year 9 pupils, including those of lowest ability, can read at a level necessary to understand work in Years 10 and 11. Pupils express themselves well on paper. Their work across the subjects they study is logical and presented well because they try hard and take a pride in it. In all year groups, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are progressing well in response to focused interventions in class provided by classroom assistants and very good individual support and guidance.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have successfully, introduced a wide range of 16

to 19 study programmes. School leaders' vision of high-quality courses, post 16, to enable pupils from the locality, especially the disadvantaged, to have a secure route to university and careers, is firmly being realised.

- The first A-level results in 2016 were encouraging. They compared well with the national picture in terms of grades achieved and progress made by individual students. Most students who embarked on courses completed them. Students' progress in individual subjects between Years 12 and 13 compared well with national rates.
- The 2017 results were slightly better and generally reflected the good progress that students had made in most subjects. Results in the range of A\* to C grades rose significantly as did the proportion in the range A\* to B. Disadvantaged students made the same good progress as others in the school. More students successfully applied to higher education institutions, including universities, than in the year before.
- Current students in Years 12 and 13 are making good progress on their chosen courses because teaching is consistently good and members of staff are on hand to support them every step of the way. Many fully develop the independent study skills necessary for success at this level and beyond, but some are still rather dependent on their teachers for further support rather than persevering with work on their own. Some students still do not spend enough time reading around topics and studying on their own.
- Leaders have provided courses for students who join the 16 to 19 study programmes with weak skills in English and mathematics. Last year, the GCSE course in English was successful because all of the students met their targets, but in mathematics several did not achieve the GCSE grade that they needed. Leaders have now introduced more effective provision for students who have weak GCSE results in these subjects and progress to date is better than in the year before.
- Effective tracking of students' attendance and progress on their courses soon identifies any who fall behind or need extra assistance. Leaders do all they can to ensure that students meet their targets and apply for higher education courses. Good careers advice enables students to make the right decisions about the higher education courses they should apply for.
- Students are mature and sensible. They do their best in lessons and become fully engaged in debates and the work set by their teachers. Strong links with universities result in a wide range of visits up and down the country to enable students to make choices about courses they believe will be beneficial to them.
- Leaders do all they can to ensure that students have adequate advice on topics such as personal safety, student finance, sexual relationships and potential threats to their welfare from the internet.
- Good leadership and management of the 16 to 19 study programmes ensure that students are placed on suitable courses and that they have every opportunity to succeed. Growing numbers of students, especially from Year 11, indicates that students believe that the school provides them with a good deal post 16 and a very secure route to their intended future careers.



## School details

Unique reference number	138103
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10036529

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1162
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	175
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Dr John Brown
Headteacher	Mr Steve Garrett
Telephone number	01915 949991
Website	<a href="http://www.southmoorschool.co.uk">www.southmoorschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@southmoormat.co.uk">info@southmoormat.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	26– 27 February 2014

## Information about this school

- Southmoor Academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has developed 16 to 19 study programmes.
- The school forms part of the Southmoor Academy Trust, which includes another local secondary school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many staff changes at all levels of seniority including the headteacher.
- Most pupils are White British. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Very few speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium funding is above that found nationally.
- Through the auspices of the Southmoor Academy Trust, the school provides assistance to Sandhill View Academy, which is the other member school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 49 lessons, six jointly with senior leaders. They observed pupils in all year groups being taught and looked at a wide range of written work in English, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- They held meetings with the chief executive officer, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the chair of governors, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the head of 16 to 19 study programmes, staff responsible for safeguarding and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's review of its performance, records of pupils' progress, attendance records, incident logs and safeguarding procedures.
- An inspector listened to some Year 9 pupils reading.
- Inspectors also took account of 56 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 41 free-text messages from parents and 86 responses to the staff questionnaire. The school did not carry out the online pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

John Paddick, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Geoffrey Lumsdon	Ofsted Inspector
Judith James	Ofsted Inspector
Melanie Kane	Ofsted Inspector

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