

Inspection of Southend High School for Boys

Prittlewell Chase, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0RG

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 June 2024

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

Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Robin Bevan. This school is a single academy trust. The trust is run by the headteacher, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sharon O’Ryan.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since December 2014.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone is incredibly proud to be part of the school. Pupils are extremely well supported by staff and their peers, which ensures they are happy and safe. They have an unbreakable sense of community. This endures well after they have left through 'The Old Southendian Association', which sustains friendships.

Pupils see themselves as a positive force for change. Pupils lead pioneering work on promoting understanding of neurodiversity. They are proactively growing this work across other schools nationally. Pupils develop a strong sense of moral purpose.

Pupils treat each other with tolerance and respect. They know what doing the right things means. This is central to the school's values and culture. Pupils manage their own behaviour very well. This is because their sense of responsibility is so strong. For example, at lunchtime, they pleasantly organise games of 'keepy uppy' or chat in groups, with only minimal supervision needed.

The quality of education pupils experience is second to none. Pupils are challenged and supported to be their absolute best. They benefit from passionate and expert teachers who help ensure pupils consistently achieve the highest standards.

Enrichment opportunities are vast. Wherever pupils have talents and interests, staff ensure they can pursue these fully.

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

Southend High School for Boys is an inspirational place. Very long-standing leaders have worked with newer leaders to establish a culture of excellence. However, to say the school is just about academic excellence would not do it justice. There is an entire culture that develops pupils as young adults who have the highest levels of decency.

The school has put in place a broad, rich and inspiring curriculum that is extremely ambitious. On many occasions, what pupils learn goes well beyond the national curriculum or examination specification. For example, pupils become familiar with more sophisticated notions of mathematical proof as early as Year 10, building on the confidence they have developed in manipulating algebra. Sixth-form art work is of an extremely high standard and provokes deep emotion and thought. It is easy to see why the school's examination results are in the top few percent nationally.

Leaders have deliberately developed and recruited expert teachers who have a passion for what they do. Staff provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to extend the depth of their knowledge. This is because teachers enjoy imparting their expertise and pupils are enthusiastic to learn as much as possible. The school has established a culture that promotes a thirst for academic enquiry and knowledge acquisition.

Pupils study a range of highly ambitious novels. The school library plays a pivotal role in school life and functions in a similar way to a university library. Staff inspire pupils about reading and books. Pupils become avid readers as result.

The school has been recognised as one of the leading schools in the world for the experience it provides for higher attaining learners. However, provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is just as strong. To extend the inclusive reach of the school, leaders have opened a specialist resource base for pupils with autism. Staff skilfully ensure these pupils access the same ambitious curriculum alongside their peers and achieve very well.

The same levels of excellence exist in the sixth form. The school has thought very carefully about how to make girls who join at this point feel at home. Girls appreciate the freedom, creativity and meaningful student leadership roles they can take on in the sixth form.

The school has ensured that no stone is left unturned in terms of the quality of careers guidance pupils get, right from Year 7. In the sixth form, every student, no matter their background, is supported to excel. It is routine for students to gain entry to prestigious universities or apprenticeship placements.

Leaders enable pupils to know the value of supporting others, politeness and treating everyone with respect. Staff reinforce this where needed to ensure pupils stay at their best. Leaders have ensured levels of attendance are high. Leaders provide appropriate support to overcome barriers to attendance.

Leaders have brought the words of the school song 'one with future and with past, our work in school shall live and last' to life through the house system. Rich personal development is extensively promoted through music, drama and an impressive annual programme of house competitions. These promote social and moral understanding of how to deal with both victory and defeat. The school supports all pupils to realise their talents fully. The school has won many national competitions and had numerous students represent their country at sport.

Trustees know the school well. They robustly challenge, support and plan effectively for the future. Staff know school leaders balance empathy with supporting them to be their best. Staff hold leaders in the very highest regard.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136443
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10333357
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
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	1,340
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	437
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sharon O’Ryan
Headteacher	Robin Bevan
Website	www.shsb.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 December 2014 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single sex school for boys until the sixth form, where girls are also admitted.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.
- In September 2023, the school opened a specialist resource base for pupils with SEND with autism. Admissions to the resource base are coordinated by the local authority and run as a separate process to the rest of the school.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To discuss governance and trust leadership an inspector met with a representative sample of trustees.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, designated safeguarding leads, behaviour, attendance, higher attaining and personal development leads, subject leaders and staff.
- Inspectors explored the quality of the specialist resource base.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spent additional time with sixth-form students and met with the head of the sixth form and staff to discuss careers.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects, including personal social and health education and relationships and sex education, business studies, economics, art, history, politics and languages.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first. Inspectors also held dedicated meetings to explore attendance.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey. They considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text messages.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rowena Simmons	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Pritchard	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Petrou	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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