

Inspection of Southend High School for Girls

Southchurch Boulevard, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 4UZ

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 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 Jason Carey. This school is the sole member of the Southend High School for Girls single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nicola Slaughter.

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 2011.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish and excel at Southend High School for Girls. Pupils eagerly take part in stimulating and engaging lessons that light a fire for learning. Pupils develop a rich body of knowledge and achieve very highly. This outstanding provision, and the exemplary careers education and guidance programme, prepares pupils exceptionally well for their next steps.

Pupils in all key stages make great use of the myriad opportunities to develop their interests and to make a positive contribution to the school. As one pupil said, 'The school will literally help you do anything you want to do.' There are a vast range of clubs, trips, visits, and visitors. Pupils suggest and lead many of the clubs. They take part in school productions and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Most sixth-form students and many younger pupils develop their leadership skills as ambassadors and house captains. Pupils, therefore, have an important role in the running of the school.

Pupils appreciate the exemplary support and encouragement they get from staff. Pupils see the school as a family. They look out for and support each other. Pupils behave with great maturity and consideration for others.

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

The curriculum is highly ambitious. All pupils in key stage 3 study three separate sciences and two languages. The subject content covered goes far beyond the National Curriculum. The school has precisely identified what they want pupils to know. The curriculum builds up knowledge so that pupils securely gain a breadth and depth of understanding. Key knowledge is often taught before lessons through homework and independent 'super-curricular' tasks, particularly in the sixth form. This teaches pupils to study and research. It allows pupils more time in lessons to discuss and debate ideas and apply knowledge to different problems and contexts. Pupils learn how to communicate their ideas, both orally and in writing, with real clarity and confidence.

Staff use their strong subject knowledge to anticipate where pupils may make mistakes. They use questioning skilfully to tease out key learning points. They rigorously check how well pupils have learned. When necessary, they use these checks to adjust the curriculum to ensure all pupils are secure in their knowledge before advancing on to new content.

Teachers adapt teaching highly effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that their work is at least as high quality as that of their peers.

Reading is very important here. Pupils in key stage 3 routinely start almost every lesson by reading. There are many rewards and competitions. These encourage pupils to read widely and often. When pupils need additional support with their

reading, well-trained staff and older pupils support them to become fluent and accurate.

The school has very high expectations of behaviour. Pupils almost always meet these. In the very rare instances that they find it hard to do so, staff work supportively with them to ensure they improve. Pupils attend very well.

The school is tenacious and highly effective in its work to ensure all of its pupils are happy, safe, and successful. The pastoral team provide exceptional support for pupils' well-being. Pupils know that they have adults who will help them if they are struggling.

The school's careers education programme is exceptional. Pupils learn about the world of work when they meet a carefully chosen range of employers, business people and apprenticeship providers. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, visit universities. Pupils make use of a wide range of opportunities to visit workplaces. Their aspirations are high. When pupils need advice on their next steps, they receive it. They are, therefore, very well equipped to make informed, ambitious choices about the next stages in their education or employment.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is precisely planned and effective. Pupils in all key stages learn about topics such as consent, managing personal relationships and coastal water safety. Staff consult pupils as part of their ongoing review of the PSHE curriculum, and the curriculum in other subjects. As a result, they adjust it accordingly to ensure the curriculum evolves to meet the needs of pupils.

The school is relentless in its desire to keep improving. Leaders, including governors, check how well all pupils are achieving and how much use they are making of the opportunities on offer. They ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do so. Staff receive high-quality professional development and support for their well-being. This helps them work very effectively for, and with, pupils.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	136444
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10288488
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1250
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	370
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicola Slaughter
Headteacher	Jason Carey
Website	www.shsg.org
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 December 2011 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision for pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, design and technology, modern foreign languages and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders, including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the trustees of the school.
- An inspector met with the early career teacher and staff involved in their induction.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- 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 scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 212 responses and 174 free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the 96 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 326 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Rob James	Ofsted Inspector
Tom Sparks	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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