

# Southfield School for Girls

Lewis Road, Kettering, NN15 6HE

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b> <b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good 2
Leadership and management		Good 2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The percentage of students gaining grades A\*-C including English and mathematics in GCSE is average and has not risen since 2011. Too many students achieve well in either English or mathematics but not both.
- Students who enter the school in the middle of the ability range do not make enough progress in English. This did not improve in 2013, although it is improving for current students in the school.
- Results in English, art, design technology, geography and physical education are only average. Students do not do as well in these subjects as they do in mathematics, science, history and French.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium do not make as much progress in English and mathematics as other students in the school.
- While teaching in the school is improving strongly, it is not consistently good across all subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- More able students do well at GCSE and gain results, across a range of subjects that are well above national averages.
- Teaching in mathematics and science is good and students of all abilities do well in these subjects.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students take personal responsibility for their learning and take advantage of the many opportunities that exist in addition to their timetabled lessons.
- In the comparatively short time she has been in post, the headteacher has introduced more effective processes for managing staff performance, overseen improvements in several key subjects and provided better training for staff. She has the universal support of students, parents and staff.
- Governors take swift action to prevent poor performance and have recently made many effective leadership appointments.
- The sixth form is good. As a result of strong teaching, particularly in mathematics, and clear guidance, students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 part-lessons, taught by 40 teachers. Nine lessons were observed jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also attended registration and tutors periods.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, subject, year group and Key Stage leaders, teachers, governors and four groups of students.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school’s documents on safeguarding and finance, the school’s view of its own performance and plans for future improvement. In addition, the inspection team examined the school’s information on how well students are doing, records relating to teaching, behaviour and attendance and documents used by the leaders to evaluate the school’s work.
- Inspectors considered the 104 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, additional parent responses provided by the school including a letter from one parent sent directly to the lead inspector during the inspection, and the responses provided by 36 staff to the staff questionnaires.
- A trainee inspector shadowed one of the additional inspectors during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Anne Pepper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Neil Gillespie	Additional Inspector
William Cassell	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Southfield School for Girls is an average-sized single-sex secondary school. It has a mixed sixth form.
- Southfield School for Girls converted to become an academy in August 2011. When the predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2010, its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both below national figures.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and are supported through school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs are all below average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is below average. This additional funding is given to schools for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups.
- A small number of students are educated off-site in alternative provision provided by 'Complementary Education' and the 'Hospital and Outreach Education Service'.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has consortium arrangements for the sixth form with two other schools, The Latimer Arts College and Montsaye Academy.
- The school does not enter any students early for GCSE examinations in English or mathematics.
- The current headteacher, who was previously the deputy in the school, was appointed as acting headteacher in the summer term 2012 and was appointed as substantive head in September 2012. A new deputy headteacher took up a part-time post for two days a week in June 2013 and became full time from September 2013.
- The headteacher is an accredited facilitator for the National College of Teaching and Leadership Middle Leader Development Programme which runs within Southfield School for Girls.

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

- Make teaching at least good and secure more outstanding teaching in all subjects by:
  - systematically sharing the strong practice in planning, teaching and assessment in mathematics and science so that all departments, and particularly English, are equally strong in these key areas
  - implementing the plan to set identified teachers precise targets that are clearly linked to their impact on students' achievement in their subjects.
- Improve the progress of middle-ability students, especially in English by:
  - identifying these students and their targets on teachers' seating plans and ensuring that the progress of these students is linked to whole school targets and included in whole school monitoring systems
  - making better use of examination style questions, linked to specific grade criteria that set out the particular response expected for that question so that students' progress can be assessed more accurately and immediate adjustments made to the lesson
  - identifying earlier students at risk of not gaining a C grade in both English and mathematics, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium, and targeting additional support so that their performance is more consistently good.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not enough students achieve consistently well in all their GCSEs and too few middle attaining students make the progress they should. The percentage of students in Year 11 gaining five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics fell in 2012 and in 2013. Students enter the school with average standards overall and results are still only average when they leave. Progress is not good enough in English for students who join the school having achieved a low or middle Level 4 at primary school.
- Although students develop positive attitudes to learning in some subjects, this is not uniformly the case in English language, English literature, art, geography or physical education.
- The gap between students receiving the pupil premium and their classmates is not closing fast enough in English. Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to provide support for targeted groups, rewards and specific financial support. Subjects can bid for additional funding for specific projects funded specifically through the pupil premium. In 2012, the gap in attainment between students eligible for the pupil premium and other students was two years in English and 14 months in mathematics. However, in 2013, the gap was still 16 months in English, and is wider than in mathematics.
- Reading is promoted well in subjects as well as in additional classes and as part of registration and tutor time. The library is an exciting and lively hub in the school. There are, however, too few opportunities for students, as opposed to teachers, to read aloud to the class. Students have frequent opportunities in lessons to write independently and at length. This means that literacy skills are seen as relevant and essential for learning.
- Leaders monitor the progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these students make the progress they should. Children looked after by the local authority and students who speak English as an additional language make good progress as a result of the high quality care they receive in the school.
- A small number of students in Year 10 and Year 11 have attended alternative provision provided by Complementary Education and Hospital and Outreach Education service. The school checks their attendance and how well they are doing, and ensures that they are doing as well as they should and match the progress seen in other students in the school.
- Achievement in the sixth form is improving as a result of improved provision across the consortium and more rigorous entry requirements to Year 12 and Year 13. Results across all academic and vocational subjects rose in 2013 and are average overall. Most subjects perform above national levels at A level and the majority do so at AS level. All students who have not gained a GCSE grade C in English or mathematics are taking it in the sixth form.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the school requires improvement because not all students are making as much progress as they should. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good or better, but this does not reflect the quality of teaching over time, which has led to a legacy of underachievement in some subjects, notably in English. This has been especially true for middle-ability students, and also in some other subjects; art, geography, physical education and design technology.

- In lessons where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not make enough use of specific students' comments to adjust their teaching during the lesson. Similarly, not enough use is made by some teachers of students' responses to exam-style questions linked to specific grade criteria and this hinders their ability to assess students' progress in the lesson precisely and accurately.
- The school has introduced a new system for using seating plans for each class to show students' targets and current performance. Although this has been effective in helping the school focus on the progress being made generally, it has not been used to determine whether specific groups, such as middle-ability students, are making enough progress, especially in English.
- The best lessons are characterised by positive and supportive relationships between staff and students and a strong ethos for learning. Where teaching assistants were present in lesson, together with staff, they often have a galvanising effect, promoting independence by students. The school has made good use of Year 7 catch-up funding to appoint additional teaching assistants and provide more resources for individual students. This has led to gains in students' improvement but these are not as marked in English as they are in mathematics.
- Teaching in science and in the sixth form is good. The teaching of mathematics in the sixth form is outstanding. Strong assessment and feedback by teachers both through marking and by adjusting teaching during lessons are key features of this good and often outstanding teaching. Led by mathematics and now adopted in science, teachers increasingly encourage students to become skilled at assessing their own work using checklists, colour coding showing how well they are doing, and by setting their own targets for improvement.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students' conduct in lessons and around the school and site is respectful and courteous. They display positive attitudes and are developing independence in their learning, both in lessons and in participating in the many extra-curricular activities. Sixth formers are enthusiastic about the introduction of swipe cards that will allow them more independence in going off-site but only if they are on track in their subjects.
- The school works hard to fulfil its aim of developing the whole person and this is particularly evident in the highly successful Young Enterprise teams and Football Academy in the sixth form. As a result of the good teaching, strong guidance and the many opportunities to participate and lead throughout the school, the students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training.
- There are very few examples of low-level disruption in lessons. Expectations are clear and used systematically, and the recent introduction of an online praise system has been particularly effective. The real-time display of house points on screens around the school motivates the students. They have access to good quality, independent advice about how to decide on their future careers and the opportunities open to them after they leave school.
- Students, parents and staff report that bullying is rare and that when it occurs it is dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. Students know about the different types of bullying including cyber, racist and homophobic. Buddies have been successful in students providing support to each other.
- The school has re-emphasised the importance of good attendance and this, together with the appointment of a student support officer in the summer term last year, has led to improved attendance this term. The school is aware of the need to sustain this over a longer period so that attendance is consistently above average. Exclusions are very low and there have been no

permanent exclusions at all.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- In the short time the headteacher has been in post she has quickly identified and taken decisive action to improve leadership in several areas; teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning, the curriculum and in the sixth form.
- Students, staff, parents and governors all comment on the more positive approaches being taken in the school, with stronger accountability, greater openness and better communication at all levels.
- The processes for appraisal have been strengthened in the past year to set and monitor suitable improvement targets for all teachers as well as to eradicate any remaining weaker teaching. The school recognises the need for further improvements and is planning more systematic sharing of the good teaching that exists in mathematics and science, together with stronger programmes of support for individual teachers.
- The curriculum has been improved and is now good. Substantial improvements have been made to creative arts, with improved facilities for food technology and a higher profile for art with an impressive display in the art gallery. There is improved take-up for foreign languages and technology subjects for current students in the school. The sixth form curriculum has improved though the school's links with the consortium that has made available a wider range of A level subjects and vocational courses.
- The school has strong partnerships with its local schools and attracts students from some distance. As one parent commented, 'I personally feel Southfield School is the best choice of school in Northamptonshire that I could have made'. The school is so confident of the positive attitudes of its students that it has organised a programme of tours for primary pupils with their parents to see the school in action on a normal day.
- Senior leaders hold subject leaders to account effectively and new appointments have been made in English, art, design technology and physical education. Leaders check the quality of teaching and link it to the work in students' books and the seating plans that show the target and current performance of each student. However, senior and subject leaders have not ensured that all groups, and especially those arriving with middle levels of attainment, are making enough progress.
- The school has rightly focused on getting the right leaders in place this year. Governors and school leaders recognise they now need to move beyond the school to obtain additional sources of support and the rigorous challenge needed to accelerate improvement and ensure all students make the progress they are capable of.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors make a strong contribution to the good overall leadership of the school. They took the initiative in the process leading to the appointment of a new headteacher. They have worked with senior leaders to restructure their roles and make key appointments at all levels of leadership. They are aware of the need to develop a sharper understanding of whole school data and use it effectively to determine the school's impact and quality. Governors know about the overall quality of teaching and performance management and have worked with senior leaders to implement stronger processes linking salary progression to outcomes for students, including for the headteacher. They have implemented a new committee structure with a

stronger focus on achievement and are improving their oversight of students' progress and particularly that of specific groups, such as, pupil premium and middle ability students. The governing body ensures that arrangements for students' safeguarding meet the current regulatory requirements. The finances of the school are managed well and have been used to provide improvements to the building and the curriculum, particularly in creative arts and for the sixth form.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136976
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427290

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1008
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr. Chris Pettifer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Julie Goswell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10-11 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 513063
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