

# Southam College

Welsh Road West, Southam, CV47 0JW

**Inspection dates** 26–27 March 2014

|                                |                      |                    |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Outstanding        | 1        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Outstanding</b> | <b>1</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Southam College provides an outstanding education for its students.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of Year 11 students who have achieved five or more good GCSE grades at A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has been well above average.
- The vast majority of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs and the most able, make outstanding progress in most subjects.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium who make the progress that is expected in English and mathematics is much higher than average and these students are rapidly catching up with others in the school.
- Teaching is often inspirational. As a result, students have outstanding attitudes to learning and are highly motivated to achieve their very best because they enjoy lessons.
- Students behave exceptionally well in class and around the school. They are polite, well-mannered and courteous.
- Teachers plan lessons which are at the right level of difficulty for students and which result in all students making excellent progress. Students receive effective feedback from teachers which helps them to improve their work very well.
- Students feel safe at the school and they have a strong understanding of safety matters.
- The headteacher has high expectations of all staff and students. These expectations are shared by all leaders. Consequently, students have appropriately high expectations of themselves.
- The governing body has been highly influential in the school's success. It is knowledgeable about the school and provides an excellent level of support and challenge.
- The sixth form is good because of effective leadership which ensures that any underachievement is tackled quickly. However, although improving, not enough students achieve the highest grades consistently across subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 40 lessons, three of which were jointly observed with one of the senior leaders. The inspection team also made several short visits to other lessons, some with a senior leader, to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- One inspector listened to some students in Year 7 reading.
- Inspectors analysed the 105 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed a questionnaire that the school uses.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and data on students' progress.
- It was not possible for inspectors to jointly observe many lessons with senior leaders because they were taking classes which would usually be taught by staff who were taking industrial action on the first day of the inspection.

## Inspection team

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Richard Sutton, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Robert Steed                   | Additional Inspector |
| Jane Bonner                    | Additional Inspector |
| David New                      | Additional Inspector |
| Kerin Jones                    | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The large majority of students are White British. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic heritages is well below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services, is below average.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 study vocational courses at Warwickshire College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve achievement in the sixth form so that more students consistently achieve the highest grades across all subjects by making sure that work is always difficult enough.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students typically join Southam College with attainment which is above average. By the time they reach Year 11, a much higher than average proportion of students achieve five or more good GCSE grades at A\* to C including English and mathematics. This represents outstanding progress and this has been the position in each of the years since the last inspection.
- In 2013, every student in Year 11 achieved five or more GCSE grades at A\* to C.
- All groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language, students from ethnic minority backgrounds and the most-able students, make outstanding progress throughout the school in most subjects. This is because teachers make sure that students learn quickly and are given work which is appropriately challenging.
- The proportion of students who make the progress that is expected of them in English and mathematics is consistently well above average. The proportion who exceed this expectation is also above average and has improved since the last inspection.
- A much higher than average proportion of students who are supported by the pupil premium make the progress that is expected in English and mathematics. These students are rapidly catching up with the very high standards achieved by their classmates. In 2013, Year 11 students supported through the pupil premium achieved, on average, half a grade lower in English and almost a grade lower in mathematics than other students in the school. This was an improvement from 2012, and markedly so in English.
- The school spends its additional pupil premium funding very effectively. For example, students benefit from support to attend a wide and diverse range of additional activities as well as benefiting from working in small groups. Students supported by the pupil premium in all year groups and of all abilities are making good and often outstanding progress.
- A small number of students are supported through additional Year 7 'catch-up' funding, which helps those who join the school with attainment below the expected levels in English and mathematics. The school uses this funding effectively to provide these students with additional support for reading, writing and mathematics. Most of these students are quickly catching up.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE mathematics and English. This is a well-planned strategy because students achieve very well and it does not impede their chances of achieving their potential or higher grades.
- The small number of students who attend Warwickshire College on a part-time basis are achieving well because they are following a range of vocational courses which are matched to their interests.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress. This is improving this year because leaders have ensured that progress is checked in detail and any underachievement is tackled quickly. However, although improving, teaching does not always make sure that students achieve the high grades that they are capable of across all subjects, including biology and psychology.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Students benefit from teaching which is very often outstanding and consistently at least good. This has been the position for the past few years. Consequently, students make outstanding progress in most subjects throughout the school.
- Teachers skilfully use information that they have about students' attainment to plan work which is appropriately challenging, at the right level of difficulty for different students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs. The teaching is often very inspiring. This typically results in students showing outstanding attitudes to learning because work is interesting, challenging and enjoyable.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support to students who they work with because they have a detailed and accurate understanding of the students' particular learning needs.
- A significant factor in the high achievement across the school is the high-quality feedback and marking which students receive. Teachers help students to correct mistakes and provide very precise advice on how to improve their work. Teachers check that students have acted on the advice.
- Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subjects that they teach. This means that they are able to very effectively help students to improve their work so that it moves to a higher grade or level. Often teachers do this through highly effective questions which require students to think hard.
- The teaching of the most-able students is very effective because teachers ensure that work is always hard enough for these students. Sometimes, teachers give these students different work to do from the rest of the class. At other times, they expect them to complete work quicker than others. This is consistent across the school and is the key reason why these students, in particular, make rapid progress.
- Teachers ensure that relationships with students are extremely positive and these relationships make a significant contribution to the outstanding achievement of students.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. As in the main school, work is planned so that it is at the right level for students and this results in good progress. Many teachers make sure that the students who are capable of achieving the higher grades receive appropriately challenging work but this is not always the position for individual students in some subjects.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. In all key stages, including the sixth form, almost all students behave well in class and around the school. Students are polite, well-mannered and courteous.
- Students appreciate the high-quality teaching, personal support and guidance which they receive at the school. Relationships across the school are highly positive and make a significant contribution to the outstanding learning. Consequently, the vast majority of students have outstanding attitudes to learning. Students are keen to succeed and they try their best.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The school very effectively fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are

trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm.

- Students, including those in the sixth form, have a strong understanding of safety issues, including how to keep safe when working online.
- Bullying is extremely rare at the school. Students are entirely confident that, when incidents do occur, staff will deal with matters quickly. As a result, students feel safe at school.
- Students have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying. As a result, they are equipped with appropriate skills to manage such situations should they arise.
- Students attend school regularly and on time. Attendance is consistently above average.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher has successfully ensured that staff have high expectations of themselves and others. Extremely well supported by senior, subject and year leaders, he has ensured that there is a shared belief that all students have the potential to succeed. Students themselves are increasingly developing greater confidence in their own abilities and this contributes significantly to outstanding teaching, achievement and attitudes to learning.
- Leaders and managers, including subject and year leaders, have an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement because they regularly check teaching and achievement. They have effective strategies to support students who may be falling behind, and a comprehensive programme of staff training and development ensures that the quality of teaching remains outstanding. Teachers value this support.
- The targets set for teachers to help them improve their work and guide decisions about pay increases are very effective and these make a good contribution to outstanding achievement and teaching.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. Teaching and achievement are improving because the progress that students make is regularly checked in detail so that any underachievement is tackled quickly. As a result, more students than in previous years are on track to achieve the highest grades this year but this is not consistent in all subjects. The curriculum has been suitably revised to meet the requirements of the new 16–19 Study Programme.
- The curriculum makes a significant contribution to students' outstanding achievement and behaviour because it is well matched to students' interests and it promotes their personal development effectively. An extensive range of additional trips, visits and clubs, which are all extremely well attended, help students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding very well.
- Students have access to good independent advice and guidance regarding their future careers. Older students benefit from very good support to help them to make informed decisions about examination subject choices, as well as the opportunities available to students in further and higher education, employment and training.
- The local authority monitors the school's performance and has accurately judged that the school has the capability to maintain high levels of student achievement without the need for any additional support or challenge.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a detailed and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Governors are skilled in the interpretation of students' achievement data and they provide an excellent level of support and challenge to the school. As a result, the governing body has been highly influential in making sure that standards continue to be high.
- The governing body knows how the additional pupil premium and Year 7 'catch up' funding is used. Governors are aware of the very good impact that this funding is having on eligible students because they check this regularly and in detail.
- Governors know about the quality of teaching and the management of staff performance, and they are appropriately involved in making decisions about whether teachers should receive pay rises in relation to meeting their targets. They are aware of how any staff underperformance is tackled and are appropriately involved when this is necessary.

## 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> | 125738       |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Warwickshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 440629       |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Comprehensive          |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Maintained             |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 11–18                  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 1368                   |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 214                    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body     |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Lindsey Dennish        |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | Ranjit Samra           |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 18 January 2011        |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 01926 812560           |
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