

Southfield School

Southfield Grange Campus, Haycliffe Lane, Bradford, BD5 9ET

Inspection dates 17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management		Outstanding 1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding 1
Quality of teaching		Good 2
Achievement of pupils		Good 2
Sixth form provision		Outstanding 1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher leads a team who all share an ambition for excellence and are well on the way to achieving this.
- Leaders, including trustees and governors, have undertaken a clear self-evaluation. Precisely targeted school development planning is leading to rapid improvements in all areas of the provision.
- Students' achievement is good and is improving. Students are very well prepared for their future lives and leave school with an increasing range of external awards. The most able students gain qualifications in reading, writing, communication and mathematics.
- Students of lower ability make good strides in their personal, social and communication development from their very low starting points.
- Teaching is good overall with an increasing amount that is outstanding. The professional development of teachers and teaching assistants to meet the complex needs of the students is given very high priority.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Students love coming to school and to the sixth form centre and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Behaviour management is extremely consistent so that any student experiencing difficulties can quickly return to learning.
- Students feel exceptionally safe in school. Their parents agree that this is so. Relationships between staff and students are based on mutual respect and genuine regard. The care team and the communication team give excellent care, guidance and support to meet the needs of each individual student.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students make rapid progress in their confidence. They enjoy a rich curriculum which prepares them exceptionally well for the world of work or for the next step in their education. Project Search is a workplace enterprise between the school and hospital which is creating increasing opportunities for students to find placements in the work place when they leave school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Learning slows when lessons are less stimulating.
- Although lesson topics are usually well matched to students' ability, they are not always so well matched to their age.
- Marking is not always consistent with the school's marking policy to help students know how to improve their work. Students do not always have the opportunity to communicate how well they think they have done in a lesson.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and the Pathfinder Vocational Centre (sixth form). Some of the observations were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors looked at students' work in their books and in assessment folders as they moved round classrooms.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of students, members of the senior and middle leadership teams and other staff, a group of governors of the school and directors of the academy trust.
- Discussions were held with the improvement partner and local authority adviser for the District Achievement Partnership (DAP) and with other partners and providers from the local community.
- Various documents and policies were examined including those relating to safeguarding, school self-evaluation and development planning, behaviour management and performance management of staff. The school's own data on student progress was explored.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, the 102 responses to the staff questionnaire and the school's own stakeholder surveys.

Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Angela Shaw	Additional Inspector
Alastair Younger	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Southfield School converted to become an academy school in August 2013. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement overall. The school has retained its name since converting to be an academy.
- Southfield School is co-located on a new campus with Grange Technology College, a large secondary academy. Together they form the Southfield Grange Trust. There is a shared service for students with visual impairment across both schools.
- Southfield provides for students who have severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, many of whom also have autism spectrum conditions. Students generally have complex combinations of special educational needs, including students with life-limiting conditions or other significant medical needs.
- Almost two-thirds of students are boys.
- Half of all students are from minority ethnic groups with the large majority of these having English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those who are supported through the pupil premium is over twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those students in Key Stages 3 and 4 who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The sixth form centre, known as the Pathfinder Vocational Centre, is located in a separate building across the road from the main site.
- Where appropriate, sixth form students can attend Project Search which Southfield School runs in partnership with the local hospital and HFT (provider of adult disability services). This creates work place experience and potential future employment opportunities.
- Southfield networks with other special schools in Bradford in the District Achievement Partnership (DAP). This provides a mutually supportive network of special schools which also develops new teachers through Teach Direct.
- Students generally join the school at Year 7 but can be admitted at any time with a growing number of students joining for the sixth form provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring all lessons are stimulating to capture students' interest and maximise learning
 - finding ways in which students can meaningfully contribute to communicating how well they think they have done in a lesson to build their confidence
 - making sure that, as far as possible, marking is consistent with the school's own policy and helps students improve their work
 - planning work and using resources which are matched to students' age as well as taking account of their abilities
 - continuing to share best practice to develop the skills and expertise of teachers and teaching assistants who are new to special education.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and his senior and middle leaders form an impressive and highly ambitious team. Together they provide outstanding leadership with a shared vision and purpose which ensures the school is improving rapidly for the benefit of all students.
- The school's leaders and governors have a very clear view of areas of strength and areas requiring development. Clear-sighted leadership from trustees and governors of the academy has supported the headteacher in tackling under-performance quickly and effectively. Southfield works with other special schools in the District Achievement Partnership (DAP) to very effectively develop new teachers in the skills and knowledge needed to meet students' complex learning needs. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving rapidly and students' achievement is rising.
- Senior and middle leaders all play a significant role in making sure best practice is shared and that the professional development of staff is exceptional. Performance management is excellent and identifies the development needs of individuals so that the provision is constantly improving. Pay progression is always linked to good and outstanding performance.
- Senior and middle leaders have developed an excellent assessment and target-setting process so that student achievement data is understood well by all staff and governors. Groups, individuals or subjects which are performing less well than expected can be quickly identified and action taken to resolve the problem.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding and has contributed exceptionally well to ensuring the provision in the Pathfinder Vocational Centre is of the highest standard. Students leave the outstanding sixth form as well prepared as they can be for their future lives.
- Pupil premium funding has been used particularly well. It provides additional support to eligible students and a parent liaison officer has been appointed to work with families. The money also ensures equal access to all school activities. As a result, disadvantaged students achieve just as well in reading, writing, communication and mathematics and in their personal development as other students.
- Roles and responsibilities have been delegated extremely effectively. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and diligent in meeting their responsibilities and developing their teams. Highly effective teamwork across the school is a feature of its success. Students' care, communication, physical and support needs are met exceptionally well. The care team and communication team liaise closely with specialist professionals. Programmes and information are disseminated to all who need to know and training provided to staff to give students the highest quality care and support.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is matched well to the needs of the different groups of students. There is a strong focus on developing communication through speech, sign, symbols, photographs, objects of reference and technological aids as appropriate to individual needs. Literacy and numeracy skills are used in real-life situations so that students better understand the purpose of the skills they are learning for use in modern Britain.
- Co-location with Grange Technology College has given greater access to specialist facilities and the opportunity to share with the wider community. There is an extensive programme to enrich the lives, learning and enjoyment of students in the lunchtime and after school clubs. Making sure students have equal opportunity to access all aspects of the curriculum is paramount. Residential trips are offered to even the most disabled students because of careful risk assessment and excellent liaison with parents.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British moral values is promoted exceptionally well. Discrimination is effectively tackled through all subjects. Parents and the local community play an important part in developing students' understanding of life in modern Britain. Creative subjects such as sport, dance, art and performance are strong elements of the curriculum and hugely enjoyed by students.
- Older students receive excellent careers guidance to help them make informed choices about their next steps. The school has invested in, runs and very effectively monitors Project Search. This is a programme which provides work experience in a variety of posts in the local hospital and greatly increases students' chance of continuing employment.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Staff receive regular training in positive behaviour management and in safeguarding issues so that they can recognise any student who may be at risk of harm. Staff who lead on child protection are highly trained and keep excellent records to ensure students are safe. Southfield staff lead on safeguarding training to other schools in the DAP.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are highly effective. Governors work closely with trustees to provide strong leadership to the school. They have ensured that they have the knowledge to provide appropriate support and challenge to senior leaders. Governors check on different aspects of the schools' work through group investigations or individual visits.
- Governors have a clear view of performance management and the quality of teaching in the school. They make sure pay progression is appropriately linked to performance and school development planning and have worked with trustees and the headteacher to very effectively tackle under-performance. Governors have a good understanding of the school's tracking data, know how well all groups of students are achieving and how effectively the pupil premium is being used.
- Governors ensure all statutory requirements are met and that finances in the new academy are managed to the best possible standard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Students are enthusiastic learners and have extremely positive attitudes to learning. The enjoyment of all students can be seen in lessons with the most able thinking carefully and eager to answer questions. The lowest ability students express joy in the sensory experiences offered to them by smiling or showing in other ways that they want experiences, such as the playing of an instrument, to be repeated.
- Behaviour is managed consistently so that those students who occasionally have difficulty in certain situations, do not disrupt the learning of others and return quickly to the classroom. All staff are trained and updated regularly in positive behaviour techniques which help students make great strides in learning to understand and manage their own behaviour.
- During the inspection, students were seen to be polite and helpful. They take good care of their school and enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being classroom monitors, buddies, joining the school council or having the very important job of chicken monitor.
- In the sixth form, students develop their understanding of British moral values and citizenship by voting for chef, gardener and sports person of the week for each of their curriculum areas. They apply for and are interviewed for jobs in the Pathfinder Centre, helping them to develop some of the workplace skills they may need in the future.
- Students benefit hugely from the relationships they enjoy with staff, based on mutual trust and respect. These strong relationships help students to develop their self-esteem and mature into confident young adults. They love working towards their rewards, particularly for the choice of activities on a Friday afternoon.
- The behaviour and well being of sixth form students who attend Project Search placements is carefully checked by Southfield staff in liaison with members of HFT.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students, parents and staff all agree that students are very safe in school and on trips into the community. Risk assessments are thorough and ensure all students have an equal entitlement to access activities safely.
- In science, craft, cookery and horticulture lessons for example, students learn how to keep themselves safe and are encouraged to use appropriate equipment and handle it safely.
- Staff find imaginative ways to help students understand some of the risks they might face, for instance, through cyber-bullying or different forms of exploitation. Workshops and support are offered to parents to help them know how to keep their children safe.
- Students say that 'name-calling' or other forms of bullying rarely happen. They know they can ask for adult help and the matter will be dealt with if they have any concerns.
- Attendance has improved and is broadly average for similar schools. Absences are almost always due to health problems or medical appointments. The school seeks to minimise these by hosting consultant clinics at the school. Members of the care team attend these, with parents by agreement, so that they can share information which will ensure the well being and safety of students in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time in most subjects and in the different strands of learning is generally good with examples of outstanding teaching. As a result almost all students make good progress in their learning, especially in their use of English and mathematics and in the development of their communication.
- The proportion of good teaching has increased over the last few years and teaching which requires improvement is rare. This is due to the rigour with which leaders have managed ineffective practice and to the programme of professional development they have introduced and which they share with the DAP. The school has appointed a number of young teachers who are new to special education who are contributing breadth and enthusiasm. They are quickly developing the expertise they need to teach students at Southfield but leaders and other staff are still providing guidance.
- Lessons are generally very well matched to the abilities of the different groups of students. Very occasionally, activities and resources are not well-matched to students' age.
- Effective team work between teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff enable all groups and abilities of students to learn well. Students are encouraged to work as independently as possible but provided with all the support necessary to ensure new learning takes place in lessons. Skills such as adding-on in mathematics for the most able or indicating a preference for those of lower ability are practised in different ways as often as necessary to ensure they have been achieved.
- When lessons are taught with energy and enthusiasm, as happens most of the time, students enjoy their lessons, try hard to answer questions, make contributions and learn well. Very occasionally lessons are less stimulating and learning slows. Students particularly enjoy practical activities such as outdoor learning when they make shelters for themselves or bug houses to protect insects through the winter.
- Students with profound and multiple learning difficulty are taught well by very skilled staff. Technology is used very effectively to aid students' communication. A wide range of resources are imaginatively employed to enable students to enjoy new experiences, particularly through the use of music. Teachers plan sessions using intensive interaction (students taking the lead, for example, by choosing actions which staff copy).
- Literacy and mathematical skills are practised through all subjects of the curriculum. For example, in a food studies lesson in the sixth form, students read recipes for pancakes and collected ingredients and equipment they needed. Then they worked out how much of each ingredient they would need to measure out in order to make enough pancakes for many more people than the recipe allowed. When students are capable of reading and writing, teachers promote the development of these skills well.
- All staff use questioning very well to help students deepen their thinking and listen patiently to their answers. Marking is improving but does not always help students improve their work. Students do not always have an opportunity to express how well they think they have done in a lesson in a way that is meaningful to them.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Overall students make good progress from their different starting points throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. In the sixth form they make outstanding progress, building quickly on the firm foundations laid previously.
- All students start at the school with skills which are below and, for the large majority, well below those expected for their age, owing to their special educational needs. Almost all students make at least expected progress in English and mathematics and in their communication skills. The school identified that progress in mathematics was not as strong and took steps to improve the teaching of mathematics which has resulted in significant improvements in progress. There is now no difference in students' achievements overall in English and mathematics.
- The most able students are able to understand mathematical language and use it appropriately, such as in a lesson on inversion when Key Stage 4 students demonstrated that they could turn sums around to check their answers. They all knew that the skill they were practising was called an inverse process.
- Students develop their communication through the consistent use of systems which are well-matched to their individual needs. As a result, students make good progress in their speaking and listening skills with the most able learning and applying words for the subject they are studying. For instance in a Key Stage 4 lesson on sound effects, students were able to use 'synchronise' appropriately while in a Key Stage 3 science lesson about changing materials they used appropriate language such as 'pliable, flexible and stretchy'.
- Those students who are the most able are supported to develop reading and writing skills, which will be useful to them in their future lives. All students learn to love books and share information about them.

- The progress of the most disabled students is checked very carefully to be sure that the very tiny steps they make are recognised and built upon. In the swimming pool, for instance, staff watch carefully for increased movements or responses to colourful toys. The highest priority is given to supporting these students to communicate their needs and wishes more effectively to improve the quality of their lives.
- All groups of students achieve equally well from their different starting points. Disadvantaged students are given additional support through the pupil premium so that sometimes they achieve better than other students but always at least as well. There are no significant gaps between the performance of minority ethnic and white British students nor of boys and girls. Students following different curriculum routes achieve equally well from their starting points.
- Key Stage 4 students attain external awards wherever possible and continue to add to these into the sixth form. The range of external awards is increasing year on year and demonstrate the improving English, mathematics and personal development skills students achieve.
- The large majority of students move into the sixth form and students join from other settings. During their time in the Pathfinder Centre, students make outstanding progress because they access courses which match their needs and interests particularly well. They are as well-prepared as possible for their future lives. When they leave, students move to extremely well-planned continuing education or care settings with an increasing number of leavers moving into employment through Project Search.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- The quality of education provided in the Pathfinder Vocational Centre, the school's sixth form, is outstanding. The leaders have aimed high in providing a rich, expertly planned curriculum for this age range. The knowledge and training of staff to work with the post 16 students are outstanding.
- Students grow in maturity, independence and readiness to leave school and move into adult life. As well as building on their prior numeracy, literacy and technology skills, students learn how to use them effectively in real life situations.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers understand students' talents and their needs exceptionally well. Teachers constantly challenge students to work things out for themselves and have high expectations for what they can achieve. For example, students following a horticulture course were given mathematical challenges. The teacher asked those of lower ability to calculate how many bulbs were needed to make up bags of ten. The challenge for those of higher ability involved multiplication in order to predict how many potatoes they might harvest from the number of buds on chitted potatoes.
- Student behaviour is excellent in the sixth form. Students respond enthusiastically to the expectations of the vocational curriculum, choosing sport, horticulture or catering as a focus for their learning. They learn skills which may lead to future employment opportunities or to continuing education to prepare them for more independent futures. Students are optimistic about their futures.
- Throughout the curriculum students learn how to live healthily and keep themselves safe, for instance by growing and cooking healthy foods and using kitchen or gardening equipment safely. Students are offered choices and guided to make sensible, safe decisions.
- The Pathfinder Centre is separate from but close to the school and provides an environment in which students can feel they have 'moved on' to a more collegiate setting. Some of the most profoundly disabled sixth form students continue their education in the school setting where the focus is on continuing education to develop independence and self-help skills as far as possible for their future lives.
- Employability skills are strongly promoted by giving students a wide range of opportunities to experience different work situations and visiting different colleges and other providers so that students can make informed choices about their futures.
- All achievement is very carefully recorded and monitored. Feedback is often verbal but staff make sure it has been understood so that students know what they have to do to achieve better and are able to contribute to planning for their future sessions.
- The sixth form is outstandingly well led and is constantly developing to meet the changing needs of students. The range of vocational opportunities and accreditation widens each year.

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

Unique reference number	139978
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	449940

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Donna Pankhurst
Headteacher	Dominic Wall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01274 779662
Email address	d.wall@southfieldgrange.org.uk

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