

Inspection of South Shore Academy

St Anne's Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 2AR

Inspection dates:

25–26 September 2019 and
16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told us that they are happy at South Shore Academy. They were keen to tell us how much the school has improved over the past 18 months.

Pupils know that only good behaviour is acceptable. We saw pupils working hard in class because teachers have high expectations of them. The pupils that we talked to said that they feel safe and that bullying is not an issue. They said that even though friends sometimes fall out, teachers quickly sort out any problems between pupils. Pupils feel that the support that adults at the school provide really helps them to learn.

Pupils enjoy the many extra activities that are on offer. Older pupils who have completed the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award are proud to wear a different uniform that recognises this.

Pupils said that, in the past, there had been far too many temporary teachers. Now they are delighted to have permanent teachers who are making a real difference to their learning. Still, these recent changes have not made a difference to pupils' success in GCSE examinations. GCSE results remain weak.

Pupils' attendance is improving but it is still not good enough. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have the best attendance.

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

In the last 18 months, trustees, governors from the local community and leaders have worked together to make drastic improvements to the school. Many of their actions have been fruitful. A purposeful curriculum and a raft of new teachers who are experts in their subjects mean that pupils are learning more than they did in the past. That said, there is still much more to do before all pupils receive a good quality of education.

Staff absence and weaknesses in teaching the curriculum have contributed to the weak examination outcomes. The GCSE results in 2018 were very poor, especially for disadvantaged pupils. The 2019 results are not much better. Pupils are getting a better deal now because lessons are well organised. Even so, many older pupils who experienced what the school was like some time ago still have gaps in their knowledge. This holds them back from achieving as well as they should.

Leaders have made sure that pupils experience a broad and rich curriculum. Teachers know what should be taught. For the most part, teachers follow the agreed plans and seek to deepen pupils' knowledge. In some subjects, where the curriculum is still quite new, teachers are not as successful in ordering learning carefully to help pupils to remember more.

Leaders know that pupils' literacy skills often get in the way of learning. Teachers across the school promote literacy well. They focus on key vocabulary and make sure that pupils understand any new terms that they meet. We saw pupils learning new words as their teacher read a novel during form time. The school provides extra teaching for pupils who find it hard to read. Pupils' reading ability is improving quickly.

Pupils' behaviour is improving swiftly because they can understand what the teacher wants them to learn. The pupils we saw had a positive approach to their learning. This meant that their teachers did not have to waste time waiting for everyone to concentrate.

Most staff provide helpful support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the past, pupils with SEND did not achieve as well as they should have. Leaders ensure now that pupils with SEND follow a similar curriculum to everyone else. Staff make sure that these pupils' welfare needs are met. That said, there are some teachers who are less confident in providing the support that pupils with SEND need to achieve well.

Staff provide lots of clubs and activities for pupils outside normal lesson times. These clubs add to pupils' learning in lessons and help them to gain a wider view of the world. They raise money for charities and take part in debates to discuss events that are happening around them. Pupils develop into considerate and respectful young citizens.

One courageous decision that leaders have taken was to reduce significantly the high number of pupils on alternative provision. Leaders did this to make sure that these pupils were safe and learning properly. In the past, many pupils were sent to alternative provision because they did not behave in school. This does not happen anymore.

The trust took decisive action to stop the school spiralling into decline. School leaders have been supported well during a difficult period of staff instability. This has calmed down. Staff absence is more the exception than the rule now. Teachers feel valued by leaders, governors and the trustees.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders make sure that new members of staff are suitable to work with pupils. All members of staff receive regular training so that they stay confident in knowing what to do if they have a safeguarding concern about a pupil. School leaders follow up safeguarding issues with determination when agencies from outside the school are slow to act.

Pupils have lessons about how to protect themselves from the different risks that they might face outside school. For example, they know about the dangers of knife crime and protecting themselves from exploitation.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- School leaders and all other staff must ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, do as well as possible in their GCSE examinations and other qualifications. The improvements to pupils' learning, behaviour and achievement are recent. This means that pupils often have gaps in their learning that teachers need to help them to fill. This is a particular problem for older pupils. Leaders should also provide further support to those staff who are less confident in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.
- School leaders must ensure that they continue to use alternative provision in ways that benefit pupils. In the past, far too many pupils attended unsuitable alternative provision. This contributed to pupils' poor results rather than helping them to be successful.
- School leaders must ensure that teachers in different subjects are equally effective. School leaders have made sure that the curriculum is increasingly suitable to give pupils a challenging and deep education. However, pupils benefit from this less in some subjects than others. Teachers vary in their skill at developing pupils' understanding.
- School leaders and other staff must ensure that pupils' absence reduces. The school's work to insist on pupils attending school regularly is starting to make a difference. Attendance is increasing. However, too many pupils are still absent from school for too much time. Pupils away from school do not benefit as much as possible from the education provided.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140021
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10087864
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	720
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Rubin
Headteacher	Neil Reynolds
Website	http://southshoreacademy.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	21–22 March 2017

Information about this school

- A new head of school and executive principal have been appointed since the previous inspection. A significant proportion of teachers have joined the school since that inspection.
- The school has moved into newly-built premises on the same site as the previous buildings since the previous inspection.
- The school uses five providers for off-site alternative provision for a small number of pupils. These providers are Athena, DHF Autos, Education Diversity, 4Tech or the Alternative School.
- The school is part of the Bright Futures Education Trust (BFET).

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- On the first day of the inspection, we looked closely at how the curriculum is provided in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. We talked with senior school leaders, subject school leaders, teachers

and pupils. We looked at plans for the curriculum. We visited lessons and examined pupils' books.

- On the second day, we sought further evidence to test our ideas about the quality of education in the school. We also completed gathering evidence about pupils' behaviour and attitudes, their personal development, and the school leadership and management of the school. We met with school leaders to discuss these topics, held discussions with trustees and members of the local governing body and talked with pupils during breaktime and lunchtime.
- As part of our work, we looked closely at the arrangements for safeguarding pupils. To do this, we met with school leaders, talked to other staff and checked with pupils that they felt safe. We looked at documents such as the school's record of safeguarding checks made when staff are appointed and the safeguarding policy.
- We examined other documents including the school's improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation document and records about pupils' behaviour.
- We spoke to representatives of the local authority and some of the alternative provisions used by the school by telephone.
- An inspector met with two representatives from the board of trustees, four representatives from the BFET executive committee, including the chief executive officer and three representatives from the local governing body.
- Four inspectors visited the school on 25 and 26 September. This was followed up by a further visit from an Her Majesty's Inspector on 16 October to gather additional evidence.

Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector
Nell Banfield	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Gregory	Her Majesty's Inspector

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