

Southam College

Address: Welsh Road West, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 0JW

Unique reference number (URN): 143905

Inspection report: 21 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

There is a comprehensive, meticulously considered personal development and wellbeing programme in place. Pupils study a culture and character curriculum that helps them gain a deep understanding of others and the world around them. Pupils have a detailed understanding and appreciation of fundamental British values, such as tolerance, respect and the rule of law. They show excellent cooperation, confidence and independence when interacting with their peers. All pupils have an opportunity to take on a leadership role. For example, pupils become peer mentors, members of the student council or sports captains. These skilfully develop their experience of responsibility.

The relationships and sex education and health programme is well matched to pupils' needs. It helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of risks to their wellbeing. For example, pupils learn about antisocial behaviour and sexual violence. They are also taught how to stay safe online. Leaders pay close attention to ensuring that pupils are enabled to understand and manage their mental health, as well as seek out support if needed. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure pupils can access the right support at the right time.

Leaders are rightly proud of the 'memorable experiences' offer. This includes a vast range of clubs, visits and activities that are tailored to pupils' interests. For example, a group of Year 9 pupils attended a golf range, while a group of Year 7 pupils took part in a hairdressing activity. Leaders systematically track and review access to these opportunities for all pupils. They take decisive actions to ensure that pupils benefit from them.

Pupils are very well prepared for life beyond school. There is a comprehensive programme of careers education. This ensures that all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well supported. Employers and other providers are extensively involved. Almost all pupils move onto an appropriate pathway.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed a curriculum in the sixth form that is both accessible and challenging. It is well tailored to students' needs and aspirations. Students value the wide range of activities beyond the taught curriculum. This includes opportunities to engage with the local community and raise money for charity. Students also engage enthusiastically as leaders in aspects of school life. They act as subject ambassadors or take part in the lively and thriving peer mentoring programme.

Teachers have very secure subject knowledge. They use it well to explain complex knowledge and vocabulary. Teachers check students' understanding rigorously. They encourage all students to think deeply about the lesson content. Students work very well independently and engage in high-quality discussions with peers. Student responses in lessons and their work in books show a significant depth of knowledge. Above-average outcomes are also typically evident in national tests and examinations.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Any needs are identified early when students arrive in the sixth form. They receive a range of bespoke support, including for their study skills, which also helps them to achieve.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically achieve well. This is evident in the work they produce in lessons. Pupils' achievement in national examinations is generally close to the national average. Disadvantaged pupils generally achieve in line with disadvantaged pupils nationally. However, there is variation in the progress and achievement of some pupils. Leaders do not consistently ensure that those pupils who join the school as high prior attainers progress and achieve as well as the same group nationally at the end of key stage 4. Elements of this are also reflected in their work.

Leaders support pupils to secure their essential knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders carefully promote opportunities for reading. Teachers check that pupils understand key vocabulary and have basic skills in mathematics. This helps all pupils access the curriculum. Overall, pupils are ready for their next steps and move on to appropriate education, employment or training. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders closely analyse attendance information. They identify trends and patterns in absence and put appropriate support in place to improve attendance. Over the past few years, overall attendance has been close to average. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils has generally been improving and is closing towards the national average. Leaders are currently focused on improving the attendance of pupils who rarely attend school. Their strategies are wide-ranging and highly personalised. They are having a positive impact on some pupils who have had historically very poor attendance. This includes some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

School leaders use data about behaviour well to identify trends and patterns. The number of pupils who have been permanently excluded or suspended is low. The school's behaviour policy is well understood by staff and pupils alike. In lessons, pupils are respectful of their peers and behave well. There is very little disruption. Pupils move around the building calmly with minimal staff supervision. Social time is very pleasant. Leaders provide popular and welcoming places for vulnerable pupils to gather at social times. Leaders respond quickly and effectively to the small number of bullying or discriminatory incidents that occur.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders maintain a clear oversight of curriculum and teaching. The curriculum is carefully designed and well sequenced. It helps pupils to build on their prior learning and deepen their understanding. The key stage 3 curriculum creates engaging opportunities for pupils to develop an interest in a wide range of subjects. This helps pupils to make more informed choices at key stage 4.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use school assessment processes effectively to check pupils' learning. Teachers provide additional activities that help pupils to address misunderstandings. Teachers generally design appropriate tasks that enable pupils to develop their understanding. However, at times, the activities that some pupils complete do not effectively build on what they already know or deepen their knowledge as well as they could. This is especially true for some pupils who joined the school as high prior attainers.

Leaders carefully check that pupils have the necessary key reading knowledge and skills to access the curriculum. Where needed, pupils receive targeted phonics support and additional reading sessions to further develop their fluency and confidence. When required, teachers typically provide pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged with the support they need. They generally adapt their lessons well so that pupils successfully access the same learning as their peers.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have put in place robust systems and processes to identify the needs of vulnerable pupils. Teachers apply this well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use their training to generally provide specific support that helps pupils to learn. Where needed, teachers engage, motivate and encourage pupils effectively. Leaders have close links with external partners and access specialist help to further support pupils with SEND.

Leaders place a high priority on supporting the wellbeing of vulnerable pupils. They have created a bespoke space where pupils can access support during the day, including at break and lunchtimes. It also provides support and guidance that helps some pupils to refocus before returning to their learning. Leaders work collaboratively to support disadvantaged pupils. They use additional funding such as the pupil premium grant to prioritise helping pupils attend regularly and engage with wider school activities.

Leaders carefully track the progress, wellbeing and attendance of pupils. This includes for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and those who are known, or previously known, to children's social care. Leaders adapt the curriculum, teaching approaches and pastoral support well to meet pupils' needs. Leaders make use of some alternative provisions. They are used appropriately and complement the work of the school well.

Leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths of the school. They recognise the areas that need further improvement. Leaders carefully check the quality and impact of the actions they take to improve the school. Where necessary, they quickly adapt their plans. They ensure staff and governors are fully involved in developing improvement priorities.

Governors and trustees share leaders' views of the school. They particularly value the work that leaders do to provide wider support for pupils. This includes the extensive wider opportunities, charitable work and excellent careers support. Governors and trustees deliver their statutory duties, such as effectively monitoring, supporting and offering challenge to the work of leaders. They take care to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the necessary support. Leaders have built close relationships with external agencies to support their most vulnerable pupils. The carefully considered work of leaders to support pupils is recognised by parents and carers. It has supported effective relationships with families.

Leaders recognise the importance of developing staff. There is an effective programme of training in place. Leaders use an effective approach to help staff develop their own practice. Teachers in the early stages of their career are well supported. Staff describe a culture of 'We are all learners here.' Staff value the considerable investment in their professional development and wellbeing.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Southam College is a friendly and welcoming place to learn. Pupils benefit from positive relationships with their peers and teachers. They behave well. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. They move around the building calmly and with purpose. They use the wide range of facilities with admirable maturity. Pupils understand and demonstrate the school values of kindness, confidence and resilience. Bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. Most pupils attend regularly. They are proud to be part of the school community.

Pupils benefit from a well-designed curriculum. There is a broad range of subjects that interest and engage them. Pupils enjoy learning. Teachers help them to build their subject knowledge through well-embedded lesson routines. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils receive effective support. This helps them to overcome barriers and learn as well as their peers. Pupils show high levels of concentration and take increasing responsibility for their learning as they get older. By the time they reach the sixth form, students produce work of a consistently high standard. Pupils and students achieve well and are very much prepared for their next steps.

Staff prioritise pupils' personal development and wellbeing. There is an effective programme of character and careers education. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents and skills beyond the taught curriculum. All pupils benefit from a programme of memorable experiences that vary from a trip to the theatre to looking after horses. There are many clubs and activities after school. Pupils, particularly those in the sixth form, have meaningful

opportunities to take up leadership roles, for example, as reading mentors for younger pupils.

Next steps

- Leaders should improve the achievement of those pupils who join the school as high prior attainers by ensuring that teachers make highly effective choices about what and how to teach.
 - Leaders should continue to improve pupils' attendance, particularly for key groups identified by the school, which include severely absent pupils.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Stowe Valley Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ranjit Samra, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Clare Chevassut.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, the vice principals, other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, the CEO of the trust, the chair of trustees, the chair of the local governing board and other governors during the inspection.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 4 unregistered alternative provisions.

Principal: Melanie Mason

Lead inspector:

Deborah James, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sarah Malam, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Bailie, Ofsted Inspector

Helen Reeves, Ofsted Inspector

Mark Fenton, Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Wells, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 21 April 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,623

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,650

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

16.85%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.22%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.96%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	48.7%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50.4%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50.6%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	49.3	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	49.6	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50.6	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.08	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.05	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	15.2%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	12.5%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	14.3%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	31.3	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.6	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	35.3	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.15	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.55	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	15.2%	53.1%	-38.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	12.5%	53.1%	-40.6 pp
2022/23 (final)	14.3%	52.4%	-38.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	31.3	50.4	-19.1
2023/24 (final)	30.6	50.0	-19.4
2022/23 (final)	35.3	50.3	-15.0

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.15	0.16	-1.31
2022/23 (final)	-0.55	0.17	-0.72

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	94%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	93%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	97%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	36.59	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.81	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	33.50	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	9.2%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	11.0%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.8%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	22.3%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	27.0%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	26.0%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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