

Name of School:	Southfield School
Head teacher/Principal:	Stephanie Roberts
Hub:	Northants
School type:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Estimate at this QA Review:	Outstanding
Date of this Review:	05/12/2018
Estimate at last QA Review	This is the school's first review.
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	04/02/2016

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

School Improvement Strategies	OUTSTANDING
Outcomes for Pupils	OUTSTANDING
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	OUTSTANDING
Area of Excellence	ACCREDITED
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Not applicable
Overall Estimate	OUTSTANDING

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

1. Context and character of the school

- The first telephone conversation with the school involves the head girl explaining contact options. This is a wonderful introduction and sets the tone for a school focused on the full breadth of student development. Existing outcomes are amongst the best in the local area and the school has the clear ambition of being 'world class'. This is an application of the ethos built around the concept of 'a world of possibilities'.
- Southfield is an 11-18 girls' school, single gender at Key Stages 3 and 4 but accepts boys into the sixth form. At present, there are approximately 1,000 students on roll, with an increased Year 7 intake this year in response to a local authority request. The school deprivation indicator is below the national average, as is the proportion of students from ethnic minority groups, or those accessing disadvantaged funding.
- The school was formed in 1976 following the amalgamation of two previous girls' schools. It has evolved through grant maintained and foundation designations to the present academy status achieved in August 2012. This is the first year of its involvement with Challenge Partners.
- The school is on a sustained journey of improvement. An Ofsted 'requires improvement' judgement in 2013 progressed to 'good' in 2016, with subsequent improvement in outcomes over the following years. Overall progress is being continued by the present headteacher and senior leadership team, with predicted positive outcomes for the present cohort.
- The school is characterised by a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Both students and staff smile and greet visitors warmly. This in turn is matched by a positive and constructive work ethos that is both calm and productive. It is a school where ethos and practice coincide together.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

- No previous QA Review

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The school has a clear sense of long-term sustained improvement with initiatives demonstrating continuous impact. GCSE outcomes illustrate this.
- Effective planning for the future focuses on sustainable practice with input to provide a long-term legacy for effective learning. The introduction of metacognition into Year 7 and wider study skills for Key Stage 3 validate this approach.
- Successful improvements have been introduced that account for external changes to curriculum and assessment requirements shown in recent modifications to

- pedagogy in English and mathematics.
- All improvement strategies are developed in the context of structured monitoring and evaluation. The process and priority for developing consistent quality first teaching and learning is a relevant example.
 - The senior leadership team has a clear understanding of the school and lucidly communicate their vision and ideas to middle leaders, teachers and students.
 - Issues of concern have been identified, and appropriate action taken. This year, for example, sixth form leadership has been reviewed in the light of results and links are being established with other successful sixth forms.
 - Underperformance has been addressed and there is clear evidence of effective strategies improving subject and teacher performance.
 - Professional learning (PL) is given a high priority with input relevant to school targets and teacher need. The integrated package is given primacy as illustrated by the weekly allocation of time to PL. Lesson observation feedback indicates that PL has improved the quality of teaching and learning.
 - The revised appraisal system enables staff to have a bespoke provision linked to their own personal development and relevant to whole school priorities. This includes an audit of upper pay scale 3 staff and their subsequent sharing of expertise through the PL provision.
 - Middle leaders have autonomy to bring about effective teaching and learning. They operate within a helpful line management structure that offers both support and accountability. Middle leaders appreciate being 'listened to' and being part of a collaborative approach that facilitates a consistent whole school approach.
 - The school makes effective use of information technology systems to record information and monitor progress for both staff and students, such as 'MINTClass' and 'SchooliP'. This raises teachers' awareness of students' needs and the subsequent quality of learning and progress.
 - All leaders are aware of personal development and well-being issues that potentially bring about effective subject learning. The introduction of the 'InspirED' provision to aid self-confidence and the appointment of a family support worker are improving outcomes and are strongly appreciated by students.
 - The school is outward facing and seeks effective input from appropriate expertise that directly impacts upon school improvement in areas such as SEND and geography.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

- ...the monitoring, evaluation and implementation of reforms to sixth form provision improved Key Stage 5 attendance and student progress.
- ...consistent best practice performance by middle leaders and upper pay scale 3 staff promoted sustained school improvement.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs

- This was the school's first review.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- There is a positive student attitude toward teaching and learning, consistently shown through an enthusiastic desire to learn. This is clear in all key stages and subject areas.
- Strong relationships between staff and students are expressed in mutual respect. These qualities are across the school and witnessed in the positive interaction between staff and students in lessons.
- Both within the classroom and around the school, a calm and purposeful atmosphere generates a stimulating learning environment in which students consistently engage in learning.
- Lesson planning is a strength of the school, providing a range of experiences through different strategies and activities.
- Teacher subject knowledge is strong, with material delivered in a clear and appropriate manner and adapted to respective ages and ability ranges. Whole school assessment is consistently applied in line with school policy. Assessment is both rigorous and accurate in most situations, offering a strong foundation for subsequent learning. Assessment information is communicated effectively with clear expectations that staff implement the information in future planning.
- Teachers consistently display high expectations for student learning in all key stages. Excellent examples were seen in a Year 7 science lesson where students were required to use scientific vocabulary and, in a Year 11 history lesson, students used their prior knowledge routinely.
- Effective scaffolding for learning is a characteristic of the best quality lessons. Year 13 'A' level PE and Year 11 drama lessons and work demonstrated embedded good practice.
- The role of dance and music are of specific importance to the school. Teaching and learning in these subjects are exemplary and they play a significant role in developing wider social skills and student well-being.
- Learning in Key Stages 3 and 4 demonstrates significant independent study with students taking the initiative with their own learning. In Year 8 geography and Year 10 mathematics, lessons showed examples of student decision-making.
- Best practice reflects embedded patterns of challenge and effective feedback. Learning in Year 10 English demonstrated relevant differentiation and, in Year 11 textiles, differentiation was combined effectively with clear feedback through a constructive dialogue with students.
- Student self and peer assessment makes a significant contribution to monitoring progress and best practice ensures that this impacts positively upon subsequent

learning. This is embedded across the mathematics department.

- The limited quality of teaching and learning observed at Key Stage 5 was of a consistently high standard. Year 12 psychology was characterised by a judicious combination of theory, coupled with contemporary issues. In Year 13 biology, the teacher developed subject literacy through challenging tasks; questioning in Year 12 PE reflected challenge and strong prior knowledge.
- The whole school literacy and numeracy policies are effective. The impact of mathematics across other subjects is a clear strength, with effective literacy illustrated by the consistent focus upon and use of subject vocabulary.
- Student voice was highly appreciative of the teaching and learning experience at Southfield, with animated comments on the quality of their education.

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

... the impact of quality first teaching was clearly reflected in sustained improved outcomes for students of all abilities across the three key stages.

... student self and peer assessment was consistently monitored and guided by teachers to ensure a positive impact on subsequent progress.

... best practice for understanding student misconceptions and understanding was more consistently applied through high quality questioning.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- The 2018 Progress 8 results were well above national and local figures. This performance is supported by similar outcomes for Attainment 8 and Ebacc and the combined English and mathematics standard passes.
- English, mathematics, Ebacc and the open element subjects all showed positive Progress 8 scores, as did low, middle and high prior attainers.
- These 2018 outcomes reflect a similar pattern to 2016 and 2017, placing the school in the top 5% nationally for Progress 8.
- Progress 8 for disadvantaged students in 2018 was above the national average. However, there remained a gap when compared with the outcome of the wider cohort.
- When three long term absentees (three years each) are taken from the 2018 data, disadvantaged students achieved a positive residual for Progress 8. This reflects a similar performance to previous years and places the outcomes for disadvantaged students above the national figure for non-disadvantaged students.
- The outcomes for students with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) who attended school were positive in 2018. However, those with wider social and emotional concerns did not perform so well.
- The data for existing students indicates performance for the present academic year will be of a similar standard or showing a slight improvement on those of 2018.
- The predictions for 2019 show a potential slight decline in the Progress 8 and

Attainment 8 scores but reflect significantly positive outcomes. The school's history of rigour, accuracy and cautious assessment offers a sound foundation for confidence in the predicted data for the Year 11 existing cohort.

- The 2018 results at 'A' level showed a negative progress residual, with results slightly below the national average but marginally above local averages. Sixth form strategies implemented in September 2018 demonstrate an immediate impact on key issues such as attendance, with figures showing an improvement and an impact on improved outcomes.
- The school now provides a wider suite of post-16 courses more suited to the student cohort; this offers a realistic expectation for improved outcomes.
- Recent assessment data shows a slight improvement for the performance of the present Year 13 and more significant improvement for Year 12 outcomes.
- Progress across Key Stage 3 is positive, with the majority of students either on or above target in each year group and subject.
- There is a marginal underperformance for disadvantaged and SEND students.
- Benchmarking and assessment are secure in Key Stage 3, with evidence of strategies improving the progress of weaker students. The Accelerated Reader programme is an example of this.
- Current data indicates that students who enter the school with below average reading ages catch up with their peers during Key Stage 3.

5. Area of Excellence

Mathematics

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

The department has sustained a year by year impact on student outcomes across all key stages and student ability ranges.

This is a well-established department with a track record of outstanding practice of teaching and learning within the classroom. The school quality assurance procedures consistently demonstrate this high level of performance. This is illustrated by detailed provision such as problem solving strategies in Years 7 and 8, alongside a GCSE bridging pack for Year 9. This bridging provision is repeated for prospective 'A' level students who subsequently progress to effective post-16 learning.

There is an extensive extra-curricular and enrichment provision that offers challenge and opportunities to apply the subject through activities such as national competitions. The ability to deliver collaborative practice within the department ensures consistent teacher performance and student learning experiences. Subject staff and students record their appreciation of both qualities.

There is an established track record for sharing good practice with a wider audience that includes teacher training organisations, local schools and extending into wider localities such as Birmingham. Evidence from other subject areas, such as geography and science, clearly shows the impact of wider numeracy provision within the school.

There is positive student feedback on all aspects of learning mathematics. They speak of enjoying the subject and the confidence to struggle with difficult topics and concepts in order to make progress.

5.2 What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

The subject leadership team has sustained a well-established department with a collaborative approach that ensures consistent good practice across mathematics. Core to the outstanding performance has been the development of effective initiatives for teaching methods, strategies and pedagogy. The teaching team has established an extensive bank of resources to encourage active learning and a student mindset that is 'not scared of trying'. The resources are constantly evolving through teacher discussion and reflection.

An outward facing attitude has promoted good external links with a local initial teacher training provision alongside other local schools. Leaders have extended their outreach further afield to schools in Birmingham.

Thoughtful planning has ensured all new curriculum and assessment changes are incorporated in a systematic teaching, learning and assessment provision across all key stages. Significant staff expertise and thought has incorporated IWB software into teaching methods.

Teaching and learning methodology, alongside a constructive leadership approach, has resulted in a sustained process of feedback and review for all aspects of department development and practice. In each teaching group, staff facilitate regular student feedback that informs subject development and subsequent learning strategies.

5.3 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

There are sustained positive 'A' level outcomes over four years, including the percentage of A*/B grades. 'A' level further mathematics shows an even more impressive set of outcomes.

At GCSE, mathematics Progress 8 scores for 2017 and 2018 indicate a significant positive residual, with the 2018 results being well above the national average for six of

the seven sets taught. Attainment data also reflects consistently high performance across the full cohort that has been sustained over a number of years. Leaders have maintained the positive outcomes for disadvantaged students, alongside a similar pattern for low, middle and high attainers.

External examination results are based on consistent, positive outcomes for Key Stage 3 progress and assessment.

5.4 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

Name: Chris Meadway

Title: head of mathematics

Email: cmeadway@southfieldsch.co.uk

6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

A constructive dialogue with schools that have outstanding Key Stage 4 outcomes and subsequently achieve outstanding Post-16 outcomes across a range of course options. At present, the school does not sustain progress in Key Stage 5 based on students' prior achievement and is seeking strategies to address this issue.

A constructive dialogue with other schools who seek to link school improvement strategies explicitly to international teaching and learning research.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.