

Inspection of Spring Hill High School

C/O 28 Slade Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 7PG

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils join Spring Hill High school with limited experience of success in education. Staff help pupils to successfully re-engage in education. Pupils benefit from an education that enables them to achieve meaningful qualifications. They are taught well and are supported by staff who know and understand their needs. Staff have high expectations for all pupils. This is reflected throughout the whole school community.

Basic skills in English, mathematics and reading are taught well. Teachers carefully consider what to teach and when to teach it so that pupils' knowledge builds successfully over time. Teachers make sure that pupils have opportunities to practise reading and writing regularly. This prepares pupils well for their future steps. Teachers identify the knowledge that pupils need to remember in most subjects. They make sure this content is revisited often. However, in some subjects the curriculum is less well-developed, so pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils generally behave well. Relationships with staff and their peers are positive. If things do go wrong, familiar adults support pupils to help them put things right. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. Leaders and staff say that bullying is rare and make sure that it is dealt with if it happens.

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

Prior to joining Spring Hill High School, pupils have disengaged from learning and many pupils have had very limited educational experiences. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils and have designed a rich, broad and balanced curriculum to enable them to realise these expectations.

Pupils are taught across four sites. Each site is unique and is set up to meet the differing needs of the pupils. Pupils on all sites benefit from the same ambitious curriculum, which is adapted to meet their individual needs. This means that all members of the school's community, including post-16 students, engage in rich learning opportunities and achieve well.

Basic skills in English, mathematics and reading are taught well. This is because teachers of these subjects have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. They plan learning that builds on what pupils already know and make sure that pupils have lots of opportunities to revisit skills and knowledge. Teachers use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to inform what they need to learn next. This means that pupils learn more and remember more over time.

In a few areas of the curriculum that are less well constructed, pupils cannot readily recall prior learning as well as they should. This is because the subjects are not taught in a logical way which enables pupils to build new knowledge and retain existing knowledge.

Alongside the taught curriculum, pupils engage in a range of activities to promote their personal development and growth. Careers education is purposefully planned, taking in to account pupils' aspirations. Through tailored sessions and work experience, pupils are able to make informed decisions about their futures. They know what they want to do when they leave school and say they feel well prepared for their next steps.

The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is planned well. Pupils learn about appropriate relationships as well as keeping themselves physically and mentally healthy. Music therapy enhances the curriculum well. This work is far reaching and extends beyond the pupils to support their immediate families. Parents speak highly of this provision.

Pupils generally behave well. On the rare occasions when pupils struggle to manage their emotions, staff use effective strategies to help them to manage their own behaviour. This enables pupils to return to learning quickly and safely. Pupils say that attending school helps them to make friends. They say that bullying does not really happen. They are confident that staff would resolve any problems swiftly. Pupils who met with the inspectors said they feel safe at school.

Staff say that leaders are supportive of their well-being and actively look to manage workload positively. They find leaders helpful and approachable. This means they have a healthy work-life balance. Leaders have a clear focus on staff's professional development. Staff are actively supported to improve their skills and knowledge. They value these opportunities.

Parents speak positively about the school. Several parents say it has turned their children's lives around and they now come to school happily and want to come every day.

The proprietor and leaders are supported by a board of governors. They are committed to developing the success of the school. However, systems for governance require further strengthening. While governors provide leaders with challenge, the processes for checking on all aspects of the school's performance are not precise enough. This means that some actions across the school's sites are not completed in a timely manner. The proprietor makes sure that the school meets the independent school standards. Leaders have produced a detailed accessibility plan to ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding policy pays due regard to current guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It is available on the school's website.

Staff know the pupils well. This means that they are quick to recognise when something is not quite right. They act on concerns swiftly and take the necessary actions to make sure pupils are safe. All staff know how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect. Systems for reporting concerns are robust and leaders follow up the concerns with tenacity and rigour.

The curriculum is underpinned with many opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, leaders have not developed a curriculum that enables pupils to successfully build on their knowledge over time. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects sets out clearly what pupils should learn and when, to enable them to learn more and remember more.
- Governors' checks on the school's performance are not rigorous enough. They do not check carefully if leaders have followed up key actions. Governors need to further revise their systems to ensure that they hold leaders to account fully for all aspects of the school's operation.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

School details

Unique reference number	134982
DfE registration number	330/6112
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10238122
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	9
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Lee Baillie
Chair	Barbara Scrivens
Headteacher	Gary Edmunds
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,585 to £91,041
Telephone number	0121 240 0992
Website	www.springhillhighschool.co.uk
Email address	info@springhillhighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–12 March 2020

Information about this school

- Spring Hill High School is an independent day school situated across four sites in Birmingham. The school operates from the following addresses: 141 Wood End Lane, Birmingham B24 8BD; 113 Orchard Road, Birmingham B24 9JE; 36 Hunton Road, Birmingham B23 6AH and 28 Slade Road, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7PG.
- The school offers places to pupils aged 11 to 19 who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The school was last inspected in March 2020, when it was judged to require improvement. Since then, the details of the proprietor have changed and the school has appointed a new headteacher.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The lead inspector also met with the proprietor and the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including reading; mathematics; history and citizenship. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to talk about the processes for reporting and acting on concerns. Inspectors also spoke to staff about systems for keeping children safe. The school's single central record was scrutinised.
- A number of key policies were reviewed in accordance with the independent school standards including: curriculum, complaints, behaviour, health and safety, bullying and admissions. The school's admissions register was also reviewed.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Harwood Ofsted Inspector

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