

Inspection of Soar Valley College

Gleneagles Avenue, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 7GY

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Julie Robinson. This school is part of Aspire Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Julie Robinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Susan Welford.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Soar Valley College under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Soar Valley College to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as an academy. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a very strong sense of community at the school, where pupils and staff genuinely care for one another. Pupils are especially respectful of each other. Relationships are particularly strong. Pupils work hard to live up to the school's motto of 'aspire, enjoy, achieve'. The school's deliberate and thoughtful actions ensure that pupils feel safe. Pupils are happy and enjoy learning.

The school is unfailingly ambitious for the achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to and exceed the school's high expectations and consistently achieve highly. Pupils are curious and very keen to learn. They concentrate well and take responsibility for their own learning. This prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.

The way the school develops pupils' character is exemplary. The school's thoughtful personal development programme ensures that pupils are very well prepared to become active citizens who can make a difference. Countless opportunities exist for pupils to develop and extend their personal and social skills, talents and interests. Pupils aspire to use their leadership skills to make a positive contribution. Older pupils proudly serve on the 'student leaders' team'.

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

The ambitious curriculum is designed skilfully to enable pupils to achieve high levels of academic success. The school has ensured that the curriculum is sequenced and builds in complexity very effectively. Topics build logically over time so that it is clear what pupils should know, understand and be able to do.

Staff deliver the curriculum consistently very well. Teachers provide pupils with clear and careful explanations. Pupils benefit from well-considered opportunities to practise and apply their knowledge. Teachers ensure that pupils revisit, practise and embed important ideas well. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They check pupils' understanding effectively and resolve expertly any errors or misconceptions that may arise. Pupils achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum.

Provision for pupils with SEND is exemplary. The school identifies the needs of these pupils accurately and communicates these effectively to teachers. Staff make well-considered adaptations to activities. This enables all pupils to access the curriculum and succeed strongly.

The school provides for an orderly and highly purposeful environment. Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour. Some pupils receive extra help to manage their feelings and emotions as part of the school's 'exchange' programme. These pupils benefit from high-quality support to get them back on track where needed. Pupils are respectful, courteous and highly considerate towards both peers and adults. Pupils arrive at lessons on time and eager to learn. Attendance is very strong, and the school is relentless in seeking to improve attendance further.

The school routinely identifies pupils who need help with learning to read. Pupils benefit from targeted support, which helps to build their reading fluency and confidence. A large proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. This support particularly benefits them.

The school's provision for pupils' wider personal development is exemplary. There is a very wide range of activities deliberately designed to enhance pupils' enjoyment of school and to support their learning. Pupils take opportunities to engage in sports, creative arts and debate as well as further academic study through subject-specific groups. Work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is skilfully embedded in the curriculum and beyond. Pupils develop strong character. They learn about different faiths and perspectives and show appreciation and respect for diversity. This prepares them exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. Careers education is highly developed. Expert guidance ensures that pupils are fully informed of the numerous pathways open to them when they leave school.

Leaders at all levels tenaciously seek ways to improve and refine the school's work. Trustees and governors know the school very well. They provide rigorous but supportive challenge to ensure the school provides a highly effective education. The school engages well with others to share expertise. Staff feel well supported and are immensely proud to be part of the school. Leaders have built positive working relationships with staff and carefully consider their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked-after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148877
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10347708
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,559
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Welford
CEO of the trust	Julie Robinson
Principal	Julie Robinson
Website	www.soarvalley.aspirelp.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Aspire Learning Partnership in June 2023.
- The school currently uses four unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other school and trust leaders. They also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: computing, English, history, languages, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with pupils from a range of year groups.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and various policies.

Inspection team

Jamie Clarke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jules Gordon	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Ridley	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Horrocks	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector

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