

Inspection of a good school: Swanmore College

New Road, Swanmore, Southampton, Hampshire SO32 2RB

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2023

Outcome

Swanmore College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly and happy school. Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Most pupils and parents appreciate how well behaviour is managed. However, some perceive that approaches may not be fair. Nevertheless, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the site is excellent. Leaders deal with bullying very well. Pupils have a range of adults in school they trust to help them if necessary. Consequently, pupils feel safe in school.

Leaders are determined that pupils have a well-rounded experience of school. They have put in place an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, and teachers share these high aspirations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across different subjects. They are also well prepared for future learning. However, a few pupils in key stage 4 would benefit from targeted support to help them become fluent readers.

Pupils benefit from an impressive programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. This equips them with the cultural understanding, character and memorable experiences needed to play a full and active role in life. Furthermore, because sessions are led by teachers and support staff, and often include pupils from different year groups, they contribute to the school's distinctive 'family' ethos.

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

Leaders have put in place a broad and inclusive curriculum. They have taken effective action to increase the proportion of pupils studying languages, and thus the English Baccalaureate. Leaders carefully map out what pupils must learn as they progress through each subject. They also include themes linked to the wider world. This enables teachers to deliver sequences of lessons which help pupils to build up subject knowledge and skills and develop their broader social and cultural appreciation. Most teachers skilfully select activities and materials which help pupils to learn, and they carefully check understanding before moving on to new content. Pupils benefit from helpful feedback

which they use to improve their work. Consequently, pupils generally can remember and apply what they have learned. Pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, produce work of a high standard.

Staff understand the importance of reading for learning and pleasure. Pupils read diverse and ambitious texts throughout the curriculum. Staff identify pupils in key stage 3 who struggle with reading, and these pupils receive very effective support to help them swiftly develop fluency and confidence. However, not all weaker readers in key stage 4 receive the same high-quality provision.

Pupils with SEND achieve well. Leaders provide helpful guidance to staff about how to support them. Teachers adapt the curriculum effectively for pupils with additional needs, and this enables all pupils to learn alongside each other successfully. SEND and pastoral staff work closely together to ensure the approach to supporting pupils is individually tailored. They support pupils who find it difficult to meet the school's expectations of behaviour appropriately. Leaders promote high standards of behaviour, which means that the school is very calm and orderly. Consequently, learning is not disrupted. This benefits all pupils, including those with SEND. However, leaders understand that some pupils and parents do not perceive sanctions as always being fair.

Personal development is a strength of the school and inspires pupils to become confident, caring and resilient. Staff use the established programme to teach pupils how to navigate an increasingly complex world safely and about the importance of equality, health and online safety. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the future. Leaders ensure that the well-designed careers programme makes strong use of links with local employers and training providers. Leaders take care that all pupils can access these activities.

Strong governance ensures that challenge and support for school leaders are effective. Governors fulfil their statutory duties diligently. They know the school's strengths and share in leaders' reflective and measured approach to improvement. Leaders and governors are mindful of staff's workload and well-being. Consequently, staff feel valued and give generously of their time to pupils. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high priority in the school. Strong leadership and oversight from governors ensure that systems are extremely well organised and highly effective. Staff receive routine, high-quality safeguarding training. Consequently, there is a culture of vigilance and care. This means that staff swiftly identify and refer pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders' positive relationships with outside agencies, and effective in-house support, ensure that pupils receive the help that they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from harm, including online. Pupils know what to do, and who to go to, if they need support.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Support for pupils in key stage 4 who are still in the early stages of learning to read is not as effective as it could be. As a result, a small number are not fluent readers. This impacts how well they are prepared for current and future learning. Leaders should embed a rigorous approach to helping older pupils who struggle to read which mirrors that in place in key stage 3.
- Some pupils and parents perceive that some sanctions are not always fair or consistently implemented. This is because leaders do not communicate clearly enough the reasons for sanctions or how actions taken to address behaviour are part of a wider pastoral approach. Leaders should continue to work with pupils and parents so they understand the rationale and benefits of the system so that everyone has confidence in the school's approaches.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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](#)' 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	116424
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10268980
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,375
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dennis Gamblin
Headteacher	Kyle Jonathan
Website	www.swanmore-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 held meetings with senior leaders of the school, members of staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, languages, design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited lessons in

food technology, music, mathematics and computer science.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils to gather their views. They considered 377 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 344 free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 92 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils while on inspection and took account of 553 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mary Davies, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Neil Strowger

Ofsted Inspector

Louise Walker

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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