

# Swanwick Hall School

Derby Road, Swanwick, Alfreton, DE55 1AE

**Inspection dates** 8–9 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher, senior and subject leaders and governors share high expectations and an unswerving commitment to ensure that every student achieves their goals, whatever their circumstances. As a result, the school has made significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Students do well in their GCSE examinations because the school has put into place good systems to check progress and because high quality support is given quickly if students fall behind.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Leaders have taken positive action to improve the quality of teaching and all staff are ambitious to make it even better.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They are friendly, polite and respectful and feel safe in school. Attendance has risen and the number of exclusions has fallen significantly since the last inspection because of high quality pastoral care.
- The range of subjects taught is interesting and challenging and provides students with many opportunities to study beyond the classroom with trips, visits, clubs and societies.
- The sixth form is good. The school has a largely open entry policy. Students make good progress, often from lower starting points, and achieve well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all students make outstanding progress.
- In a minority of lessons teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty for all students or, when marking their work, give clear advice to help them improve.
- Although much improved, the progress made by students in mathematics is not yet as strong as it is in English. Fewer students make better than expected progress in mathematics than in English.

## Information about this inspection

- Five inspectors observed 48 lessons taught by 48 teachers. In addition, they observed sessions where small groups of students were working with teachers or teaching assistants. Inspectors also listened to students read.
- Discussions were held with students, school leaders, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at examination results from 2011 to 2013 and assessment information about students currently at school. They looked at statistical information about students' attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors looked at the school's view of its own performance and plans for improvement, safeguarding documents and other policies and minutes of meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the 89 responses to Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, as well as the views of parents who wrote to the inspection team.
- The views of staff were received through the 121 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter McKenzie	Additional Inspector
Dorothy Martin	Additional Inspector
Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Additional Inspector
Judith Gooding	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Swanwick Hall is larger than the average-sized 11-18 mixed comprehensive school. There are 186 students in the sixth form.
- Nearly all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is average. Pupil premium is additional funding applied to the school for students known to be eligible to receive free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and for other students.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above average.
- The school makes provision for a small number of students in Years 10 and 11 to attend courses in hair and beauty, construction and motor vehicle maintenance at the Alfreton Vocational Academy and engineering at TS2000 in Derby.
- The school occasionally uses early entry for GCSE in mathematics.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise the achievement of all students, particularly in mathematics, by making sure:
  - tasks are always set at the right level of difficulty for students
  - all teachers provide clear advice to students on how to improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well. Results in the key measure of five or more GCSE passes at A\*-C grades, including English and mathematics, have risen steadily over the past three years and are now average. This now represents good progress from students' starting points.
- The proportions of students who did as well as expected or better than that in English were above average in 2012 and 2013. The proportion in mathematics was below average in 2012 but the school took decisive and rapid action to improve teaching and assessment in mathematics. In 2013 the proportions of boys, students known to be entitled to pupil premium support and higher ability students doing as well or better than expected have risen sharply in mathematics and sustained the good progress made in English. In lessons and students' work seen during the inspection the large majority of students made at least good progress.
- The limited number of students who take early entry in GCSE mathematics achieve well so that most go on to take the higher level examination at the end of the summer term. Early entry has been used to increase students' confidence and does not limit achievement.
- There is some variation in achievement between subjects but the school is taking effective action to address this. Senior leaders have introduced new courses, discarded unsuccessful ones and made staffing and management changes so that previously underperforming subjects, for example history, have improved. More students currently in the school are set to achieve higher GCSE grades across all subjects in 2014 examinations.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make very good progress and the attainment of students with special educational needs is above average. The school has a wide range of different interventions to support the learning of different students. For example the LOFT (Learning Opportunities Friendship and Team) provides a useful and innovative environment for students who find it difficult to work in normal class groups.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium funding are now making good progress. Average point scores for English and mathematics in 2012 showed these students to be two GCSE grades behind other students in the school. However, in 2013 this gap narrowed to one half of a GCSE grade behind in English and one grade in mathematics. These students are making better progress in English and mathematics each year over a three year period. The extra funding for their support is used imaginatively by providing specialist subject learning mentors in English, mathematics and science, additional pastoral support and extra-curricular opportunities such as specialist music teaching. The Year 7 catch up funding has been used to provide small group literacy and numeracy support for those needing an extra boost to enable them to achieve well in secondary school.
- The small number of students who attend courses elsewhere make good progress and achieve qualifications which will equip them for future employment. The attendance, behaviour and safety and welfare of these students are carefully checked by senior staff.
- The school is currently putting a strong emphasis on improving reading and writing across the curriculum in this academic year. Students are encouraged to read widely and often, for example, there is a school book club and several reading for pleasure groups. The reading ages of some lower attaining boys has improved dramatically as a result of intensive support.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students of all abilities enter the sixth form, sometimes

from lower standards than students nationally. Standards have risen steadily for the past three years and the proportion achieving passes at A\*-E is average, which represents good progress from students' starting points.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- The school rightly judges that teaching is good in most lessons and is outstanding in some. All staff are firmly committed to continual improvement with a keen focus on ensuring that groups of all abilities are able to make the best possible progress.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers have expert subject knowledge and high expectations of what students can learn and achieve. This was seen in several English lessons where students develop sophisticated techniques for interpreting the imagery of different writers. Many teachers across a range of subjects are able to fire the imagination of their students and get the best out of them. Numerous opportunities are created for students to work together in groups and lead their own learning.
- Teachers use strong questioning skills to take learning further and challenge students to think, define, explain and evaluate their answers. This results in ambitious and enthusiastic students eager to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching assistants and learning mentors make a significant contribution to the learning and progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. They offer additional guidance in lessons and support the learning sometimes of individuals and sometimes of small groups. The school has a wide range of strategies to address the needs of different students and their progress is carefully checked to make sure they are not left behind.
- In the minority of lessons which are less successful planning is not always strong enough to keep students actively involved in learning because too little is expected of them. Tasks are either too easy or too hard so that lower ability students are left behind, become passive and disinterested.
- The marking of work is undertaken conscientiously by all departments but is variable in quality. Much of the marking is helpful to students and offers sound advice on how they can improve. In the best examples students respond to teachers' comments and so a dialogue is built up. Sometimes, however, the advice is not specific enough so that students are unclear about what is required.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is consistently good and often outstanding. Students report that they feel they are treated as adults, feel challenged and supported and know there is extra help if they need it, for example from the sixth form learning mentors. Teachers demand high standards of commitment from students.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students' positive, respectful and courteous attitudes contribute to their progress and learning in lessons. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally students are too passive in less successful lessons. Almost without exception, students' behaviour around the site is calm, friendly and relaxed.

- As a result of effective measures taken by school leaders, exclusions have reduced significantly over time to well below the national average and difficult behaviour is extremely well managed. The school offers excellent support for all students and particularly the most vulnerable. Staff are determined that all students should feel safe and secure in school. This is confirmed by the positive views of parents and students.
- Very effective strategies ensure that bullying is minimal. Students report that they know who to go to if they experience bullying and have full confidence that it will be quickly sorted out by staff. Students understand different kinds of bullying such as through social media, name-calling, including derogatory language associated with sexual orientation, race and disability, and say that instances are rare.
- A comprehensive range of strategies are used to target the varied needs of different students to enable them to achieve well. This includes disabled students and those who have special educational needs, students whose behaviour gives cause for concern and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has had the Investors in Pupils award for three years. Each tutor group sets its own targets to work towards over the year. Tutor groups across the school compete for the tutor group of the year award which is chosen by the headteacher.
- Students show a good awareness of how to keep safe both on the extensive school site and elsewhere.
- The school's strong pastoral work starts with transition arrangements and close links with feeder primary schools so that students who need extra support receive it right from the start of Year 7.
- Attendance is consistently above average and has risen steadily over the last three years. Lateness is unusual and is recorded and followed up by pastoral managers.
- Students in the sixth form hold very positive views about the school and are proud of themselves and their school. They are positive role models for other students. They take on numerous responsibilities such as being responsible for sports teams, assisting with school music and drama productions and managing charity events. Some provide support for younger students in guided reading and reading for pleasure sessions. Students feel they are listened to and have a strong voice in school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for all students, their families and the wider community. Senior leaders, governors and staff all share this commitment to supporting and challenging students to achieve their goals, whatever their circumstances. This approach is key to the continual improvement made year by year in all aspects of the school's work. Leadership and management is not yet outstanding because leaders have not yet secured outstanding teaching and achievement for pupils.
- The school knows itself well. Leaders have an accurate overview of teaching and effectively support the improvement of teaching through a programme of formal and informal observations. The success of these different strategies is evident in the steadily improving outcomes for students.

- Subject and faculty leaders are held responsible for the success of their students and speak highly of the professional development they receive in order to do this well. Middle leaders check the progress of different groups of students within their subject areas and have fortnightly meetings with the deputy head to report on progress. This shared responsibility is one reason why standards are rising and progress for all students is faster.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and students are provided with strong and effective support. Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of the sixth form. Students are provided with all the necessary guidance to prepare for the next stage of higher education or employment.
- There is a large number of subjects offered which provides students with a good range of academic and work-related courses to choose from. Additionally there is a wealth of enrichment opportunities such as astronomy GCSE, dance leadership, different crafts, sign language and Japanese. In addition disabled students and those with special educational needs are provided with specific tuition which supports their very different needs. The curriculum ensures there is good development of reading and writing and improving development of numeracy. The breadth of the curriculum, along with the positive values of the school, also effectively supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. The school provides high quality advice and guidance to students in Year 11 about the options open to them at school and beyond.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Senior leaders, managers and governors work tirelessly to remove any barriers to the success of all students.
- The management of teachers' performance is effective and is firmly linked to salary progression with increased pay given only to those teachers who teach consistently well.
- The school has received light touch support from the local authority when requested. The local authority has rightly judged that the school is well able to drive its own improvement.
- Safeguarding meets all statutory requirements. Excellent practice is evident in terms of staff training and rigorous follow-up of absence. The school does all that it can to safeguard the extensive and open site.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governance of the school is good. Several new governors have been appointed since the last inspection who have taken care to attend various training courses to better equip them for holding the school rigorously to account. Governors have a good range of professional expertise, visit the school regularly and are well aware of its strengths and areas which can be better. They closely check the performance of different groups of students such as those with higher ability and those receiving pupil premium support to make sure that additional funds are spent to best effect. They oversee the performance management system and know how closely salary progression is linked to successful teaching. They have the necessary expertise to oversee the school's finances and ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112930
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425120

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1269
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	186
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gillian Bradley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Johathan Fawcett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 602106
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