

Swalcliffe Park School Trust

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123331
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	380636
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Frank Price

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

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Stoertz
Headteacher	Kiran Hingorani
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
School address	Swalcliffe Banbury Oxfordshire OX15 5EP
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Social care unique reference number	SC13054
Social care inspector	Thomas Webber HMI

Age group	11–19 Years
Inspection date(s)	18–19 January 2012
Inspection number	380636



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Introduction

Inspection team

Frank Price

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Approximately four and a half hours were spent observing ten lessons or parts of lessons, and eight teachers were seen. Discussions took place with a range of students, members of the school's governing body, and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation and school improvement plan. Ten questionnaires from parents and carers were scrutinised.

Information about the school

Swalcliffe Park School is a smaller than average special school which provides day and residential placements for secondary-aged boys who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and additional associated needs. Students attend the school from regional local authorities. The headteacher took up his post in September 2011, following a transitional period of one term in conjunction with the previous headteacher. Swalcliffe Park School is a non-maintained charitable trust. Five residential units in the school provide fortnightly residential care for up to 57 students. Currently, eight are day students. Most students are of White British origin and a very small number are from minority ethnic groups. None are at the early stages of learning English. Four students are looked after by their respective local authorities.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. The school has sustained the previous high quality of its work and is forging ahead to improve further. Extremely effective team work by members of the residential, therapeutic and education staff help to provide a seamless provision, where students are able to settle into the school quickly and make outstanding academic and personal progress. The school is very effective in helping students to overcome and understand some of their difficulties in relation to their Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Students develop into self-confident and articulate young adults.
- The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of students is promoted strongly. Students enjoy trips abroad and participating in charitable events.
- The sixth form is outstanding and students are well prepared for the future and progress on to continuing education, training or employment.
- The residential provision is outstanding. Boarders are helped to achieve well and enjoy what they do through the outstanding residential contribution to education and by the good individual support they receive. There are a few inconsistencies in the recording of some procedures and some pupils felt their belongings were not always safe. However, this does not detract from the overall high quality of the residential provision.
- The headteacher and the multi-disciplinary senior leadership team provide excellent leadership. The school has a vision to be a confident, outward-looking centre of excellence. The analysis and use of assessment data at a strategic level is in the early stages of development. Currently it is analysed at an individual level but the checking of this data, for example examining trends in subjects, behaviour or against similar pupils nationally, is not yet fully developed.
- Teaching over time is outstanding and enables student to make outstanding progress. However, the use of homework and marking is not of a consistently high standard. The behaviour and safety of students is good.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the analysis of assessment information about students' progress, behaviour and comparative data to identify trends to bring about further improvements.
- Improve the marking of students' work so that they know how to further develop their work and make more consistent use of homework, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that the recording of all procedures is consistent and review the arrangements for lockable facilities for the safe storage of students' personal belongings.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The attainment of most students is low on entry to the school, as many have experienced disruptions to their education before attending the school. However, by the time they leave, gaps in performance are narrowing considerably, as the attainment of many is broadly average, due to the outstanding progress they make. This means that many students leave school with a good range of impressive nationally recognised qualifications. Students generally achieve their predicted grades but some also achieve higher aspirational grades. This enables many leavers to go on to further education or employment. Outcomes for all students are excellent. There are no readily identifiable groupings of students, apart from a small group of students in public care. These students achieve equally well as their peers. The high level of personalisation and support ensures that no student is disadvantaged. The school goes the extra mile to reduce any hindrances to learning and the outstanding residential provision ensures students are well prepared and receptive to learning.

From lessons observed, it is clear that students are highly engaged and enjoy their learning. In one information and communication technology lesson, students made excellent progress in their understanding of the use of domain names and the credibility of information sources on the internet. Leavers speak with pride of their achievements. One student commented, 'I am most proud to be able to say I have made it to the end and finished my GCSE exams.' Parents have very positive views of the progress their children make. One parent commented, 'The progress our son has made since being at Swalcliffe has been extraordinary. We could not wish for our son to be in a better school.' This view of outstanding progress is endorsed by the inspection findings.

Sixth-form students continue their studies either at school or attend local colleges for academic or vocational courses. The destinations of leavers are an important indicator of success for the school. Many students go on to further or higher education or employment. Achievement in students' personal development is crucial. Students make significant strides in overcoming some of their barriers in relation to

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their difficulties. Intervention groups have focused on improving students' social, thinking and verbal skills. In one lesson, for example, using role play, they had to work out appropriate methods of communication for formal and informal settings.

Quality of teaching

Teaching over time indicates that it is outstanding and this is key to the excellent outcomes students achieve. All staff work hard to establish positive and supportive relationships with students and they know how to get the best out of them. Teachers are flexible in their approach. For example, in cases where students have particular difficulties learning in group situations, the school develops a personalised strategy, enabling them to remain in school. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. In the best lessons, teaching is inspirational, and lessons are delivered with pace and enthusiasm, which fully enables the participation of students. In most lessons, students are confident to articulate their views in discussions and make perceptive comments. Lessons are calm and students have positive attitudes to learning. Practical lessons, such as science, design and technology, and art are subjects where pupils achieve particularly well. Activities are often interactive and, in a physical education lesson, students enjoyed tasks to test their balance and reaction times. In lessons which are good, occasionally learning outcomes lack precision and are not explained sufficiently at the start of a lesson. There is a strong emphasis on developing numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum and between care and education.

Teaching is very effective in promoting aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, ample opportunities are given for students to work collaboratively in pairs or in team games. Outstanding teaching is supported by a very effective curriculum, which helps to promote high expectations in a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. However, the marking of students' work does not always give pointers for students to understand what they need to do next in order to further improve their work. The use of homework is inconsistent and some students commented that better use of homework would help them to improve their grades. Parents have positive views on teaching and believe their children are taught well at the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' behaviour is typically good. Nearly all students make significant improvements in behaviour. The rate of fixed term exclusions has fallen dramatically over the last year, due to better training of staff and a better understanding and implementation of a clearer behaviour policy. Most students value the points they can earn, leading to suitable rewards. Consistency of behaviour management across education and care is good. There are a few students for whom behaving appropriately is a challenge. These are managed well and sensitively to ensure any disruption is kept to a minimum. Ample support is made available to these students to help them improve their behaviour and the curriculum is modified accordingly if

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needed. The school provides good opportunities for students' moral and social development and tutor groups are valuable times for students to discuss and reflect on issues. The school keeps a log of individual students' behaviour over time, but this information has not been interrogated from a school perspective to see if there are any trends or patterns which could be addressed to bring about further improvements.

In the students' responses to the questionnaire, most said they felt safe in school. In discussions with students, none reported any issues with cyber bullying. Students acknowledge that bullying sometimes can occasionally take place, but the school is swift to tackle these issues. The high levels of supervision both in school and residential houses also help to ensure that students are safe. The school is typically a calm and cohesive community, with warm and positive relationships between students, and staff and students. All parents and carers believe their children are safe, and that the school deals effectively with bullying.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, together with the senior leaders and the governing body, provide inspirational, innovative and confident leadership and management. A clear and widely held vision has been established and has identified its work into four main areas. These are communication, achievement, independence and self-management. School improvement is viewed through these criteria, which are the driving force for its future development. In addition, a multi-disciplinary senior leadership team has been established to reflect the holistic nature of the care, education and therapeutic inputs that students receive. The effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding and makes a positive contribution to the overall development of students.

All staff receive a wide mix of professional development, including safeguarding, keeping up to date with subject knowledge, and training on aspects of Autistic Spectrum Disorders. This has had a direct impact upon the quality of teaching, academic outcomes for students and their personal development, enabling them to better cope with their difficulties.

Governors are knowledgeable and committed to the school and have been influential in providing strategic direction for its development, for example the proposed improvements to the residential facilities, and they have helped to ensure that literacy across the curriculum is promoted effectively.

The school has an excellent capacity for continued improvement. It has a track record of sustained development and a clear vision, supported by a comprehensive school development plan and committed staff, to develop the school into a centre of excellence. The school recognises that the strategic analysis of assessment information will provide further scope for continued improvements and add weight to its self-evaluation processes.

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The curriculum provided for students is outstanding and highly relevant to their needs, and enables high academic achievement in a wide range of subjects and vocational awards. It promotes the spiritual and cultural development of students exceptionally well, giving them opportunities to attend places of worship according to their beliefs, and students eagerly anticipate day trips to France or skiing. Residential pupils are fully supported to partake in an impressive range of activities both within the school and the wider community. They are also actively supported to develop their own personal interests and hobbies and make full use of the opportunities provided to them.

The ethos of the school is one where every student is valued as an individual and this leads to highly personalised programmes for students. This ensures that the school is vigilant to ensure any forms of inequality or discrimination are dealt with quickly. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are well developed and secure.

Residential provision

The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding. The school meets and exceeds the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The recommendation made at the last inspection relating to medication has been fully addressed. The school provides effective and strong leadership, where clear lines of accountability are well established. The school is committed to providing the best level of pastoral care and support to residential students. This ensures that outstanding outcomes are achieved for them. The promotion of equality is well understood and implemented.

Rigorous staff recruitment procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of residential students. Excellent staffing levels are well established, with suitably qualified and experienced staff on duty at all times. Effective systems are in place to ensure good communication between the different disciplines within the school. Positive and relaxed relationships exist between staff and residential students. However, care plans do not currently provide a comprehensive record of how the needs of residential students are being met on a daily basis.

All safeguarding procedures are adhered to at all times to ensure the welfare of residential students. Residential students are aware of how to complain. They feel that they are able to discuss any issues openly with adults and are confident that their concerns will be acted on. Prompt action is taken to address any complaints received. Records are, in the main, comprehensively maintained. However, fire drills are not consistently recorded, particularly in the post-16 house.

The school's behaviour policy focuses on positive behaviour, with an appropriate balance being achieved between rewards and sanctions. There are clear guidance and strategies established to ensure that the staff manage the behaviours of residential students in a consistent manner, although physical intervention records do not always show the views of the residential students.

A major redevelopment to the accommodation is due to be completed by 2014. These improvements will further enhance the living environment for residential students by providing mainly single, en-suite facilities. The current accommodation provides sufficient facilities to meet the individual and collective needs of the residential students. Appropriate lockable facilities are available to residential students to keep their belongings safe, although some residential students expressed concern about the safety of their belongings.

These are the grades for the residential provision

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	1
Quality of residential provision and care	1
Residential pupils' safety	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	1

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development, taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Swalcliffe Park School, Banbury OX15 5EP

I enjoyed my visit to your school and talking with many of you. Thank you for contributing to the inspection through the returned questionnaires and discussions with me. Your school is outstanding. Your school has built on the previous excellent work, and the new headteacher, staff and governors have exciting plans for the development of the school. A strength of the school is how well teams of staff work together so that new students can settle quickly and make outstanding academic and personal progress. The school prepares you well for the future when you leave the school. The residential provision is outstanding and many of you said how much you enjoyed the evening and weekend activities on offer. The new post-16 accommodation will further enhance the opportunities available to you.

The teaching you receive is outstanding and enables you to make outstanding progress. The behaviour of students around the school is good and many of you find the school reward system helpful. You told me through the questionnaires that most of you feel safe and comfortable at school and that you get on well with adults who work with you.

The headteacher, staff and governing body do an outstanding job in leading your school. I have asked the people who are responsible for running your school to do some things to improve your school even more. I have asked them to improve the way they use and analyse information about your progress and behaviour to bring about further improvements. I have asked teachers to improve the marking of your work so that you know how to further develop your work, and also to ensure homework is set more consistently in English and mathematics. I have asked the school to check that the recording of all procedures in the residential provision are consistent, and to look again at the arrangements for lockable facilities for the safe storage of your personal belongings.

You can help to improve your school by continuing to enjoy school and trying your best. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Price
Lead inspector

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