

Swanwick School and Sports College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113033
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378630
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	David Muir HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Whatton
Headteacher	Chris Greenhough
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

Melvyn Blackband

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 14 lessons and all teachers were seen teaching; meetings were held with three representatives of the governing body, a group of students and a range of staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including self-evaluation, strategic plans and evaluation of students' progress over time. Inspectors scrutinised 20 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Swanwick School and Sports College is an average-sized special school which provides education for disabled students and those who have a variety of special educational needs. These include: moderate learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; severe learning difficulties; complex learning needs; autistic spectrum disorder; hearing impairments; physical disabilities and visual impairments. All students have statements of special educational needs. The majority of students are boys. A significant majority of students are of secondary school age. The area served by the school is one of relatively high social and economic deprivation and over half of the students are known to be eligible for free school meals. All students are from a White British background and none have English as an additional language.

The school has achieved a range of national awards in recognition of its work in several areas: Youth Sports Trust Gold Partner, Investors in People, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools status, Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school has specialist school status for sports and English. It is also involved in several local partnerships and networks.

Several members of the school's leadership team left the school in July 2011. The headteacher has been in post since September 2011.

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

Key findings

- This is a good and improving school. There are particular strengths in behaviour and safety and in the way students are re-engaged in education. The school is not yet outstanding because not enough teachers are consistently delivering outstanding lessons. As a result, achievement is good rather than outstanding. Links with parents and carers are not fully developed and this contributes to the low attendance of some students
- A largely new leadership team leads by example with an impressive enthusiasm and high expectations of their own performance. This has ensured that aspirations for excellence are disseminated throughout the school. Leaders know the school well and have appropriate plans in place to develop it further. The curriculum meets students' needs effectively. High expectations contribute strongly to the rising levels of achievement, teaching and behaviour.
- Achievement is good in most subjects and key stages, and is outstanding in some subjects, due to the good quality of teaching. This is particularly evident in the school's areas of specialism.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Observations by the school's leaders strongly agree with the findings of the inspection. Leaders have a very clear understanding of what outstanding teaching looks like and are aware of where it exists in the school. The teaching of literacy in all subjects is not well-developed.
- Students behave exceptionally well and contribute significantly to the strong progress made in lessons. Students' personal development allows them to manage their own behaviour increasingly effectively. In all lessons seen during the inspection, students displayed very positive attitudes to learning and enthusiastically answered questions. Although relationships with parents and carers are generally good, there are some who are not fully engaged with the school.

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?

- Further improve achievement for all students by ensuring that current improvements in the progress of students are monitored closely over time, so that they are maintained.
- Use the best practice in the school to continue to support other colleagues to improve their teaching further by:
 - ensuring that lesson objectives clearly show expected learning for all students
 - raising teachers' awareness of their role in promoting standards of literacy in all subject areas.
- Work more closely with parents and carers and other agencies to target specific students and improve their rate of attendance.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Due to the nature of the students' special educational needs and their previous experiences of schooling, students' attainment on entry is well below the standards expected for their age. However, they all make at least good progress from their starting points in all subjects and key stages, and outstanding progress in lessons such as art and physical education. The school measures progress based on the levels the students are at when they enter the school and sets challenging targets for all. It uses national datasets to benchmark progress. During the inspection, close scrutiny of these found that the school's evaluation of students' progress is accurate and robust. Challenging targets are met and, in many cases, exceeded by students. New assessment procedures are in place for the foundation subjects, which clearly show that at least good progress is made in these areas. Despite their negative experiences of education previously, even students with the most challenging behaviour quickly settle in to Swanwick and start to make rapid and sustained progress in their personal skills. This, in turn, allows them to more effectively manage their own behaviour for learning with varying levels of support, which allows them to participate fully in lessons and make good gains in their learning. Students access external accreditation to meet their needs, throughout their time in the school. These are often via OCR Entry Level qualifications in areas of basic skills and functional skills and include access to GCSE courses and examinations in English and mathematics.

Leaders are in the early stages of formally monitoring the progress made by discrete groups of students. However, where it has been done, it is clear that there are no differences between groups, including the different types of special educational needs that there are in the school. In many of the groups, numbers are very small,

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so leaders are tracking this over time to identify any trends. This was confirmed by the school's data and by first-hand evidence of learning during the inspection. A large majority of parents and carers, who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children make at least good progress. During their time in the school, students make at least good progress in improving their skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening. On entry to the school, students are assessed to ascertain their levels. Their progress towards challenging targets in these areas are assessed regularly throughout the year.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good because it meets the needs of all students well and promotes at least good, and in some cases outstanding, progress. Outstanding teaching is evident in the school and leaders are investigating ways to use this to influence all teachers to improve their practice. At least good quality teaching was seen across the full age range and breadth of the curriculum, although some satisfactory teaching was also seen. High expectations of students' involvement are evident in the best lessons. A strong example of this was seen in an outstanding English lesson where students were discussing mature themes present in the novel 'Of Mice and Men'. All students contributed extremely well to the discussions and were familiar with using subject specialist vocabulary to enhance their responses. Skilful questioning by the teacher was a strong factor in moving learning on and made sure that students were explicitly aware of the progress that they made in the lesson. In every lesson seen during the inspection, all students were fully engaged in their learning and enjoying themselves. This enables them to make good progress in lessons over time. In a small minority of lessons, learning objectives were not sufficiently clear, so it was not easy to assess the learning which had taken place in the lesson.

During lessons, staff consistently use positive strategies to engage students and manage their behaviour. This is achieved through a thorough knowledge of their needs and interests and a strong promotion of the school's ethos of dignity and respect in relation to their learning. High levels of challenge are evident for all students in the best lessons. Although there is strong teaching by specialist teachers in English lessons, there are inconsistencies in how literacy is promoted across the curriculum by teachers of other subjects. There are daily timetabled reading sessions where students work in mixed-age groups to improve their reading. During these sessions, many individualised approaches are used to support students' improvements in this area. As a result, a large majority meet or exceed their challenging targets and gain confidence in their reading skills. Of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires, 95% agree or strongly agree that their child is taught well in this school with no negative responses.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are outstanding features of the school's work. Staff are consistent in the promotion of behaviour management strategies over time, in lessons and around the school. In a short time, after entering the school, students

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become increasingly skilful at managing their own behaviour or accepting support in this from others. This support is provided through such initiatives as positive play and support through a planned programme by specialist members of staff. The school's data show that over time, improvements in individual student's behaviour have a significant impact on the quality of learning taking place in lessons. It is also evident from the inspection, that disruption to learning through challenging behaviour is rare. The majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agree that there is a good standard of behaviour in this school. Although a small minority of parents or carers had the view that learning was disrupted in lessons, this was not borne out by evidence from the school's data or what was seen during the inspection. Some parents and carers commented that their children have shown improvements in behaviour. Although they recognise the impact of the school's work on their children's behaviour and attitudes, there are inconsistencies in how much parents and carers are involved in supporting their children's education.

Most students attend school regularly, although there are a small number who are absent too often. This results in these students not achieving as well as they could. The school takes appropriate action to tackle this and works with external services to encourage improved attendance. However, this has not had a significant impact on a small group of stubbornly low attenders. When inspectors spoke to students, they said that they feel safe in the school. Students are aware of different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, and are clear as to what action to take to prevent bullying taking place. The majority of parents and carers who responded to the school's questionnaire agree that their children feel safe in the school.

Leadership and management

Leaders have established an ethos based on raising students' self-esteem and confidence by providing them with opportunities to experience success and ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect. Leaders have accurately identified where improvements are needed, planned for this, implemented initiatives and started to evaluate their impact robustly. Performance management is rigorous and there is an increasing expectation for subject leaders to account for the progress of students in their areas. The curriculum is good and prepares students well for the next stage of their lives. The primary curriculum meets the needs of all pupils in these key stages, with additional elements such as sign language, while the Key Stage 3 curriculum ensures that a wide range of subjects are addressed through a variety of themed topics. The curriculum helps to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, through topics such as 'slavery'. As a result of a review of the themed topics, changes have now been made for the coming year, which will reinstate some discrete subjects and provide more specialist teaching in other areas. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is based on individualised routes to qualifications, depending on students' interests and abilities. This allows students to access courses from entry level through to GCSE. The governing body has a clear view of where there are strengths in the school and where improvements are needed. They ensure that all aspects of safeguarding, including recruitment records and staff training, meet current government requirements.

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In supporting the school's ethos, staff are able to develop initiatives, based on their own interests and skills. Joint observations during the inspection showed that there is an accurate view in the school of what makes teaching good and better. The school's specialism has been used very effectively to model and disseminate good practice throughout the school, which has already contributed to raising achievement. The school has identified strengths, especially within the specialist areas to provide training to staff, so that best practice is disseminated throughout the school. Due to the established systems for school improvement, and the improving outcomes already, the capacity for further improvement is good. There is no discrimination in the school and equality of opportunity is a central plank of the school's ethos, enabling all students to be supported to meet their potential. The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a range of activities, including: working in the local community; residential visits, including trips to Europe; awareness of a range of religions, and developing an understanding of diversity and equality in society. The provision is also evident in students' attitudes and ability to reflect on their behaviour.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



22 June 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Swanwick School and Sports College, Alferton, DE55 1AR

On behalf of the two inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for giving us such an enjoyable and memorable experience and sharing your experiences of your school.

We found that your school is at least good in all aspects that we inspected and is outstanding in the judgment of 'Behaviour and safety of pupils'. The headteacher and leadership team are devoted to ensuring that you receive a good quality education. It was clear during our visit, from your questionnaires and your comments, that you appreciate them and their hard work and that you enjoy school. Your behaviour and attitudes to your learning are exemplary and are clear strengths of the school. The improvements that you make in your learning during your time in Swanwick are good. The teaching and support that you receive in the school are good and adults know in fine detail how to support you and make your time there successful. This means that by the time you leave school, you are well prepared and have developed a level of confidence and independence with which to go forward to the next stage of your lives.

I have asked the headteacher to improve some things as the result of the inspection and that is to make sure that: your learning improves from good to outstanding, by improving the teaching in the school and developing stronger links with parents and carers so that they can support you in making sure you that all of you attend regularly.

You should be very proud of yourselves and the contribution that you make to the school. We particularly enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you about your experiences. Sincere thanks to you all for the time you spent with us during the visit and I would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

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