

The Swanage School

High Street, Swanage, BH19 2PH

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders communicate very high expectations of the quality of teaching, students' achievement and behaviour.
- The school's principles of ensuring each student is well known and that strong relationships permeate the school are a strength.
- Students achieve well across subjects and year groups. Groups of students, particularly disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs, receive effective support and achieve as well as their peers.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers know each student's individual needs very well. Teaching assistants are highly effective in supporting students' learning.
- Teachers have high expectations and instil clear and effective routines in lessons. Students engage positively with their learning and work well alongside their teachers and each other.
- Students are typically polite and courteous. The school site is a calm place and students feel safe. Students speak very highly of their school and their teachers. Students value, respect and take care of their school buildings.
- Students, particularly the student council, play an active part in shaping the school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developed well. Through an effective curriculum, they have a good understanding of modern Britain.
- Leaders monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school effectively. They strive for excellence and have very clear and comprehensive plans to bring about further improvements.
- Governance of the school is a strength. Governors have the highest of aspirations. They hold leaders closely to account for the quality of education provided at the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, some students are not challenged to think more deeply about their learning. This restricts the progress they make.
- Students' literacy skills are not effectively developed across subjects other than English.
- Some students do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work.
- Not all teachers consistently provide students with precise enough feedback to ensure that they can improve their learning further.
- Attendance is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of students and members of the governing body. Telephone conversations were held with the school evaluation partner and the local authority designated officer.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including information on students' achievement, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and safety, and the safeguarding of students.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of students' work and observed their behaviour and safety at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 75 responses to the online Parent View survey and 15 staff questionnaire returns. Written responses from parents were also considered.

Inspection team

Simon Rowe, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Simms

Additional Inspector

Terry Payne

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Swanage School opened as a free school in September 2013.
- At the time of this inspection, the school has students from Year 7 to Year 10. The school is currently oversubscribed for the Year 7 intake in September 2015. The school has no published examination data.
- A significant number of students join the school at times other than the start of Year 7.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium funding is higher than average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- A very small number of students access some of their education at Dorchester Learning Centre and The Forum Centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and, therefore, raise achievement by ensuring that all teachers consistently:
 - challenge students to think more deeply about their learning
 - develop students' literacy skills in all subjects
 - demand the highest of expectations with regard to the presentation of work
 - enable students to improve their learning as a result of the feedback they receive.
- Raise attendance rates to be at least in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher communicates very high expectations to both staff and students. He is ably supported by senior leaders. Students value their school and recognise that teachers genuinely care and support them to do their best. The very large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey felt that the school is well led and managed.
- All staff communicate their dedication to the school. Those who responded to the staff questionnaire said that they were proud to be a member of staff at the school.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development. Teaching is good and improving. Leaders make effective training provision for staff to support their developmental needs. The impact of training is closely monitored to ensure it has a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and raising students' achievement.
- Middle leaders are rapidly developing into effective leaders. They monitor their departments closely and have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, challenging any underperformance.
- Leaders hold staff rigorously to account for students' achievement through the targets that they set. Leaders are assiduous in their evaluation of the quality of teaching. They use wide-ranging evidence to ensure that they have a clear and accurate view of the impact of teaching on learning and progress.
- Students are very well cared for. They access regular and effective extra support where required for their academic, social and emotional needs. The pupil premium funding is carefully targeted to ensure each student receives effective personalised support to enable them to be successful. For example, many disadvantaged students benefit from support to build their confidence and self-esteem. The school ensures that all students, whatever their background, need or ability, have an equal chance of success; discrimination is not tolerated.
- The curriculum is broad and includes an extensive range of after-school activities and trips. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well developed through lessons and 'challenge days'. Students recently undertook a 'British values' day which enabled them to gain a deep understanding of people from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs within Swanage, Britain and the world. Students fully understand democracy and conduct their own elections.
- Students access a wide range of after-school activities that are available each day including arts projects, sporting activities and extra academic help. Helpful careers advice is provided through whole-day sessions, where students gain a valuable understanding of different careers and professions from visitors to the school. These sessions help to raise students' aspirations about what they are able to achieve.
- The student council is pro-active in seeking students' views. It works well alongside leaders and teachers and helps to shape the future of the school. Students indicate that staff listen to them and value their opinions.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are of a high quality. Recruitment procedures, record-keeping and regular training ensure that all staff fully understand and confidently implement the policies and practice to keep children safe. The school effectively monitors the attendance, progress, behaviour and safety of students who access some of their education at alternative providers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is a strength of the school. Members of the governing body are highly skilled and possess a wide range of experience of education and business.
 - Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development. They conduct their own monitoring visits to the school to collect first-hand evidence of the effectiveness of the school. They have a well-developed understanding of the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Governors closely hold leaders to account and will not accept mediocrity.
 - Staff performance and the link to pay awards is thoroughly understood by governors. Governors have a well-developed awareness of the spending and impact of extra government funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students conduct themselves very well around the school site and at breaks and lunchtimes. The school is

a calm place and behaviour in lessons is very positive.

- Many students join the school at times other than the start of Year 7. These students very quickly learn and accept the school's high expectations of their behaviour and conduct and settle quickly. Students arrive on time to school, wear their uniform with pride and bring the correct equipment. They fully appreciate the comprehensive support school staff provide for them. One student said, 'Teachers are the best thing about this school.' Students are proud to play an active part in their local community through a range of art and cultural activities. They empathise with those in need by actively supporting and fundraising for charities.
- The school environment is well cared for. Students rarely drop litter. Students are proud of their school and respect displays of students' work.
- Occasionally, some students do not take enough pride in their work and it is poorly presented.
- The proportion of students who are excluded from the school is low.
- Most parents who responded to the Parent View survey feel that the school makes sure its students are well behaved.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Policies, procedures and practice across the school to safeguard students are of a high quality. Staff meet twice per week to share information on each student's progress and needs; this enables staff to understand how best to provide effective extra support for those that require it.
- Students have a well-developed understanding of different types of bullying. They are clear that bullying is rare but, if it did occur, they are confident that staff would resolve the issues quickly. Students fully understand the risks associated with using the internet and know how to keep themselves safe when using social networks.
- Heads of year work closely with students and their families to support them to overcome any issues they may be experiencing. This work has helped attendance levels to improve. However, absence rates and the proportion of students who are persistently absent from school remain above the national average.
- The school liaises regularly with students who attend alternative provision. They ensure that these students attend regularly, behave well and feel safe.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have very high expectations of students' behaviour and their achievement. They model these expectations in the calm and purposeful way in which they teach, making highly effective use of praise to motivate students. Teachers establish classrooms where students want to learn and feel comfortable to give their thoughts and opinions.
- Working relationships between teachers and students are a strength. Students follow instructions swiftly, work well on their own and with each other. Students exhibit very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Teachers are passionate about their subjects. Their passion and enthusiasm motivate students to want to learn.
- Teachers are reflective and strive to be the most effective teachers possible. All staff meet regularly to discuss each student's progress and to adapt their teaching to best meet each student's needs.
- Students receive regular homework which extends learning beyond the classroom. Parents are well supported by the school to support and monitor their children with the homework that they receive which develops their understanding of how well their child is progressing.
- Teachers carefully plan lessons to take account, and meet the needs of the often wide range of students' abilities within their classroom. Occasionally, however, some students are not always encouraged to think more deeply about their learning which limits the progress they make.
- Teachers provide students with regular marking and feedback, in line with the school's policy, to enable them to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their learning further. Most students have a precise understanding of how to achieve higher levels. Occasionally, however, students are not able to improve their work as the feedback is not specific enough.
- Learning support assistants are highly effective in the classroom. They have positive relationships with students and staff. They provide effective, ongoing support for students to enable them to be successful learners.
- Students' literacy, reading and mathematical skills are developed well in subjects such as English and mathematics and also in extra support sessions outside of lesson time. However, students' literacy skills

are not consistently well developed across all subjects. As a result, the improvements students make in extra literacy support sessions are not always maintained during lessons.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many students enter the school at times other than the start of Year 7. Staff ensure they know each student's individual needs well, whatever their starting point, to provide effective and personalised support. The school does not have any published results as yet but the students currently at the school achieve well across all subjects.
- Work in books and the school's information on students' achievement indicate that they make good progress given their starting points including in English and mathematics. Students make exceptional progress in art due to the high quality of teaching they receive and their enthusiasm and determination to do their best.
- Disadvantaged students, those eligible for extra pupil premium funding, receive timely and effective support. In particular, many disadvantaged students benefit from good social and emotional support which provides them with the confidence to be able to be successful at school. While no published examination results are available for this group of students, the work in their books demonstrates that they make similar progress to other students at the school.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress. They receive effective extra support and teachers plan well to meet their needs within the classroom. Learning support provides high-quality resources to fully support each child whatever their individual needs.
- Students with low literacy levels receive effective extra support outside of lessons. Resources and support are carefully targeted to meet each student's specific needs. Students achieve well during these sessions.
- The most able students achieve well. They show great resilience and determination to do well particularly when provided with challenging activities. Students are inquisitive about their subjects and want to learn more as they strive to achieve the very highest grades. The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Parents are fully involved in monitoring students' achievement, for example the 'authentic assessment evening', during which students, teachers and parents work together to achieve a shared understanding of how well each individual is doing.
- The achievement of students who access their education at alternative providers is closely monitored. These students achieve well.

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

Unique reference number	139376
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	450056

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Angel
Headteacher	Tristram Hobson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01929 500599
Fax number	No fax number
Email address	office@theswanageschool.co.uk

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