

# Swanshurst School

Brook Lane, Billesley, Birmingham, West Midlands B13 0TW

## Inspection dates

1–2 November 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Pupils at Swanshurst are exceptionally well prepared for their future. They are happy, well cared for and secure excellent academic and personal outcomes.
- The positive and purposeful learning culture within the school characterises the work of staff and pupils.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Key stage 4 outcomes have improved year on year since the last inspection.
- Disadvantaged pupils often make better progress than other pupils nationally from their different starting points. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported and make similar rates of progress to other pupils at the school.
- The headteacher is highly effective and well supported by governors and staff. Leaders work together cohesively, combining their expertise and different areas of responsibility very well.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are highly effective and ensure good or better outcomes. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for.
- Pupils' conduct is exemplary. They are polite, respectful and courteous. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. Pupils value their education and attend very regularly.
- The curriculum places good emphasis on academic achievement while also ensuring pupils' entitlement to enriching and extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is effectively nurtured by staff.
- The school's sixth form provides an excellent range of academic and applied general qualifications. Highly effective leadership is rapidly improving rates of progress. Students currently achieve good outcomes in academic and applied general qualifications. Students are successful in securing higher education or training places that are right for them.

## **Full report**

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

- Further improve academic and applied general qualification outcomes within 16 to 19 study programmes so that they match the outstanding achievement in the rest of the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Dynamic, determined and ambitious leadership has ensured that Swanshurst is an exceptionally effective school. The headteacher has successfully enhanced the cohesiveness of leaders' work to promote outstanding personal development, teaching and outcomes. Significant improvements in the leadership of 16 to 19 study programmes have contributed to effective provision and outcomes for students. Staff, governors, pupils and parents are extremely proud of the school and value highly the strong leadership.
- Leaders have a very detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas that can be further improved. Their self-evaluation of the school is accurate, sharp and incisive. They use this to inform improvement planning that has successfully secured improvements at the school. Leaders demonstrate excellent capacity to secure further improvements.
- Middle leaders also contribute to the outstanding leadership of the school. They benefit from relevant and specific training to improve their leadership skills. Middle leaders describe a culture of shared ownership of best practice. They feel part of a bigger team of leaders. They have a high connection with whole-school improvement priorities and contribute very successfully to the strategic development of the school. Middle leaders are well supported in their work and appreciate the well-established, clear and direct working relationships that they have with senior colleagues.
- Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Some of these aspects of provision are now beacons of highly effective practice, for example the development of pupils' independent learning skills.
- School leaders have established strong and successful links with nearby schools. The headteacher is recognised for her expertise and contribution to improving the wider education system. Regular discussion and collaboration results in sharing of best practice and expertise. An outward-facing culture ensures that leaders make the most of what is on offer within the local area to benefit the school, and to validate their work. For example, leaders from other schools contribute to, and provide external validation of, the school's rigorous monitoring and review procedures.
- Teachers' performance is monitored well. Teachers who do not achieve their challenging targets are supported well to improve their practice. Staff are able to demonstrate their response to carefully thought-out teacher development opportunities through their effective practice.
- Leaders take pupils' learning needs and aspirations into account when planning the curriculum. The school's curriculum is carefully designed to be broad and balanced, and pupils benefit from an exceptionally wide range of subjects. For example, some pupils study high-quality vocational qualifications in order to develop valuable skills through applied learning. Leaders remain committed to providing pathways that help pupils to successfully move on to further and higher education.
- Leaders make sure that good extra-curricular opportunities are provided before, during and after school. Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in a wide range of clubs

and activities, including sport and the arts. Pupils benefit from a fully enriched curriculum that widens their cultural experiences and raises their aspirations. It ensures that pupils make good or better progress academically and excellent progress in their personal development.

- Leaders ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used successfully. This has a great effect on their outcomes and improved parental involvement. Tailored support and a high awareness of the needs of individual pupils are improving their progress at a good or better rate. Disadvantaged pupils at the school perform at least as well as other pupils do nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported by successful use of additional funding. Clear information about the needs of these pupils is shared with teachers. They use this information to plan learning appropriately. As a result, these pupils make strong rates of progress.
- Additional funding is used effectively to help pupils who are behind with their literacy and numeracy skills when they transfer to the school in Year 7. As a result of the additional support that they receive, the vast majority of these pupils catch up with their peers by the end of Year 8.

## **Governance of the school**

- Members of the governing body bring a wide range of experiences to their roles, and are highly skilled. They ensure that their knowledge and skills are developed through regular training. They have ensured high standards of effectiveness in the school and remain ambitious for further improvement. Governors have a high degree of confidence in the headteacher and other leaders because of their strong track record of success and their impact on school improvement.
- Governors are highly knowledgeable about the school. They are kept well informed about the impact of leaders' actions. Governors are able to validate leaders' evaluations of the school through their analysis of performance information, meetings with key staff and the probing questions that they ask. They offer a very good level of challenge and support.
- Governors are mindful of ensuring that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and make sure that the curriculum provides a wide range of relevant learning and enrichment experiences both within and outside the school.
- The governing body ensures that additional government funding is spent well. For example, they make sure that additional work to support disadvantaged pupils, those who need to catch up and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is kept under close review so that they make the progress of which they are capable.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make sure that robust and appropriate systems are in place to safeguard pupils. A sustained culture of safeguarding exists within the school. Steps are securely in place to ensure that adults working unsupervised in school are suitably recruited and

vetted to ensure that pupils are safe from harm.

- Staff are effectively trained in their child protection responsibilities to ensure that pupils are properly safeguarded. They receive regular updates that reflect current government guidance. They talk confidently about referral arrangements if they have a safeguarding concern or worry.
- Leaders are relentless in their pursuit of support for vulnerable pupils who require external intervention. As a result, leaders ensure that suitable action is taken by other professionals, when required. Outcomes of any referrals made are checked to ensure that actions taken effectively support pupils.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. Parents and staff agree that pupils are well cared for and safe when at school.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Outstanding

- Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They use their secure subject knowledge to plan interesting lessons that significantly extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress.
- Teachers and pupils have established excellent conditions for learning in the classrooms. Relationships between adults and pupils are consistently cooperative and respectful. Pupils work exceptionally well together and use each other as a resource to support and improve their learning. These learning behaviours encourage pupils to think through problems and develop confidence and resilience. For example, in mathematics, pupils are encouraged to collaborate on finding solutions to calculations they find challenging before approaching the teacher for advice. Teachers praise, reward and encourage pupils, which further contributes to the highly scholastic working environment in lessons.
- Teachers are skilful at checking pupils' learning and understanding during lessons. They use thoughtful and well-structured questioning to probe effectively pupils' understanding. Teachers use the information gained from feedback to identify common misconceptions and mistakes and incorporate shortcomings into their planning so that they are rectified quickly. Pupils are happy and enthusiastic in their responses and recognise the opportunities to learn when the answers they give are not correct. Teachers use the feedback that they receive from pupils to maximise learning time and help them make rapid progress.
- Teachers use the school's well-established formal assessment process to collect evidence about how well pupils are doing. These assessment opportunities are used to great effect in class to identify topics, and any gaps in learning, that require additional focus. Pupils participate well in this process. For example, in a science lesson pupils were analysing a recent test to determine which skills they had performed well in. They used this information to inform which learning task they moved on to.
- Pupils readily use opportunities to build on each other's understanding and develop deep and complex understanding. For example, in a drama lesson pupils presented personal research to develop their peers' learning.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are taught well. Teachers plan enhanced resources to support these pupils in class. For example, in art, teachers make sure that

pupils have access to specifically adapted equipment when appropriate.

- Pupils overwhelmingly praise teachers for the care and support they provide. They value highly their learning opportunities and demonstrate great pride in their work.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils' personal qualities make a significant contribution to their progress and achievements. Pupils are mature and proud ambassadors for their school.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of situations. They have great confidence in the school's approach to prevent and tackle bullying, discrimination or extreme behaviour. Behavioural concerns are followed up thoroughly and promptly and effective additional support quickly provided, if required.
- The school successfully tackles stereotypes and encourages pupils to value diversity. Pupils report that their learning encourages them to pursue aspirations 'that break stereotypes'. Pupils say that the high level of respect for people from different backgrounds is one of the most positive characteristics of the school. These values are embodied in learning opportunities. For example, in an English lesson pupils skilfully and sensitively interpreted how religious belief could have an impact on the motivation and actions of characters in the novel they were studying. Pupils who have recently arrived in the country comment that they feel welcomed and looked after by the school community.
- Staff deal robustly and effectively with the very rare incidents of bullying. Pupils understand the impact of derogatory language, such as racist and homophobic comments, and are intolerant of such behaviours within their community.
- Pupils are encouraged to be aware of their emotional and mental well-being. They are resilient to the pressures that young people face because they are taught effectively about how to deal with stress. Pupils are confident that they could talk to adults at the school about any problems they face.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. As a result, pupils make informed choices about their options, careers and employment. Pupils carefully consider the academic requirements and personal qualities their ambitions require. A very high proportion move on to further education, employment or training after Year 11.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' conduct and attitudes are excellent. Pupils relate well to each other and adults, including visitors. Staff and parents agree that behaviour and positive relationships are a strong feature of the school.
- Pupils are able to concentrate on their learning because of the high levels of cooperation and motivation that are established within lessons. Recent work, to promote higher levels of pupil engagement and involvement in learning, have been

successful. Pupils maximise opportunities to learn. For example, they listen carefully to each other, contribute confidently to discussions and readily share their learning with each other. They act on the clear and detailed advice provided by their teachers.

- Conduct around the school is calm and orderly at social times and between lessons. Pupils are polite and they have impeccable manners. Pupils value their school, keeping it tidy and free from damage. Pupils demonstrate pride in their school through their smart uniform.
- Levels of attendance are consistently above the national average. Persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved quickly. Staff monitor attendance very well and take early action to support pupils and parents, when required.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school is low. Leaders make sure that the school's inclusive ethos and values are used successfully to support pupils' behaviour.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision behave well and are safe. Staff from the school regularly visit these pupils and receive frequent information about their attendance and behaviour. As a result, leaders know how well these pupils are doing and take appropriate steps to safeguard them.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Outstanding

- In Years 7 to 11, pupils make excellent progress across a wide range of subjects and achieve standards that are well above those of other schools. This pattern of outstanding progress is securely evident throughout current year groups as a result of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. Within the sixth form, students currently make good rates of progress towards academic and applied general qualifications.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their learning. They leave with qualifications, skills and personal qualities well suited to the demands of further education or training. The proportion of pupils not entering sustained education, employment or training is much lower than those seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils achieving good GCSE grades in English and mathematics is consistently high and improving over time. Pupils achieve much better grades in their other GCSEs than other pupils nationally. Consequently, a very large proportion of pupils achieve the English baccalaureate.
- The outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are much better in many subjects than other pupils nationally. Small differences between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils at the school continue to reduce. These differences have disappeared for younger pupils at the school as a result of the carefully considered and effective additional support they receive.
- From their different starting points, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make similar strong progress to other pupils at the school. In key stage 4, they secure outcomes and make progress similar to other pupils nationally. In current year groups, these pupils continue to make strong rates of progress because of the effective additional support that they receive.



- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils in school. This reflects the high regard and value that the school places on supporting pupils to reach their potential. Pupils who join the school with very low or no English receive highly effective additional support. As a result, they quickly develop their communication and literacy skills and are able to access fully the outstanding educational provision at the school.
- The very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision make at least good progress as a result of the close links between the school and the providers.
- Low prior-attaining pupils make exceptional progress. Work to further improve the outcomes of the most able pupils to above national rates has been successful. Rates of progress of high prior-attaining pupils currently at the school are increasing.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Leaders of post-16 provision have very high expectations of students in the sixth form. Leadership is highly effective and has had a positive impact on improving teaching and outcomes.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides a very wide range of academic and applied general qualifications. This range matches students' interests and aspirations. Students value their learning highly and attend regularly.
- Students have highly positive working relationships with their teachers. Teachers pitch lessons at an appropriate level. Teachers are increasingly focusing on developing students' independence towards learning. These learning skills help students make the step up to post-16 study. Students' preparation before lessons enables good or better learning to take place that supports their progress. Class discussions deepen understanding and students respond positively to the highly detailed and individual support that they receive.
- Students who start the sixth form without a GCSE grade 4 or above in English and/or mathematics are required to follow a course to improve their grade. They make very good progress in these qualifications, particularly in English.
- Students' outcomes set them up very well for the next steps in their education or training. They are very well supported through the non-qualification aspects of 16 to 19 study programmes. A comprehensive programme covers a wide range of important themes, including driving awareness, first aid and current affairs. These sessions effectively contribute to the development of students' personal, social and health education and promote fundamental British values. Relevant and high-quality work experience further enhances students' preparation for the future. The proportion of students securing successful education or training is higher than the national average.
- Students learn effectively about how to keep themselves safe and healthy, exploring topics including mental health, radicalisation and healthy lifestyles. Students feel safe and are confident that there are adults at the school that they could turn to with any problems.
- Students are highly positive about their sixth form and would wholeheartedly recommend it to others. Retention is high. They are confident, articulate and highly aspirational for the future. Students are positive role models for younger pupils and



value highly opportunities to contribute to the school community while developing their leadership skills. For example, they mentor and support reading skill development for younger pupils.

- Recently, the progress of students on academic and applied general courses has improved rapidly. In 2017, students made good progress overall from their starting points. Current students make progress at least in line with national rates, and better in an increasing number of subjects.

## School details

Unique reference number	103514
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10037136

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,758
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Prof P Thickett
Headteacher	Ms D James
Telephone number	01214 642400
Website	<a href="http://www.swanshurst.org">www.swanshurst.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@swans.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@swans.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	20–21 November 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much larger than an average secondary school and has a sixth form.
- Many of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. Just over half of pupils are of Pakistani origin. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than the national average.
- Half the pupils are supported by pupil premium funding. This proportion is higher than

the national average.

- There is an above-average proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in school. A below-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health or care plan.
- A very small number of key stage 4 pupils attend alternative provision at Reach School, TLG South East Birmingham or Flexible Learning Centre.
- The school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11 and by the end of 16 to 19 study programmes in 2016. This information is not yet available for the 2017 cohort because progress information for Year 11 and Year 13 has not yet been validated.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and evaluated the quality of pupils' work in 63 lessons. Lessons covered a wide range of subjects and year groups. They carried out some observations jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. Observations of other aspects of the school's work were also made, including form time and an assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, including those with responsibility for safeguarding. Discussions were also held with two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority's commissioned school improvement provider.
- Inspectors' evaluated pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons, between lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors evaluated 68 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and through additional comments provided during the inspection. Inspectors took into account the views of members of staff through 127 responses to an inspection questionnaire, formal meetings and other discussions.
- Pupils met formally with inspectors on three separate occasions. Inspectors also conducted many informal discussions with pupils during lessons and at social times. Inspectors evaluated 612 responses to a pupil inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documentation, including school policies, self-evaluation and action plans and information about outcomes, attendance, behaviour, outcomes and teaching.

## Inspection team

Rob Hackfath, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Walters	Ofsted Inspector
Bianka Zemke	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Kent	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Lord	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Steed	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea Quigley	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017