

Inspection of Swinton Academy

East Avenue, Swinton, Mexborough, South Yorkshire S64 8JW

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They told us that they have an adult in school whom they can turn to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils feel that they can be themselves. They show respectful and tolerant attitudes towards others.

Pupils take pride in their school and want to do well. They look smart in their uniforms. They are punctual to school and lessons. Most pupils behave well. Misbehaviour is not tolerated by staff. Pupils told us that bullying does sometimes occur, but that staff deal with it quickly.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that complement the academic curriculum. They are well prepared to take their place in society as responsible citizens. Pupils are enthusiastic about how they designed and built an award-winning eco greenhouse.

Most pupils enjoy school. Until recently, there had been many changes in teachers throughout the year. Staffing is now more stable.

The work that pupils complete in key stage 3 does not match the breadth of the national curriculum. This means that pupils are not prepared as well as they should be for their future learning.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders place high importance on getting pupils ready for life beyond school. Most pupils told inspectors that they are helped to make decisions about what to do when they leave school. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They know the difference between right and wrong. They learn about different religions and cultures. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders have made improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning a priority. Pupils' conduct and attendance have improved. However, a small number of pupils are not engaged in their learning. Leaders are working with these pupils and their families to find ways to support them to improve their behaviour.

Leaders have begun to review aspects of the curriculum. They have developed new plans to show what pupils should learn in each subject area. Some topics are rushed in Years 7 and 8. Pupils either miss out on, or do not remember, important knowledge. Year 9 pupils could not remember what they had learned about the Holocaust in Year 8 because crucial bits of knowledge were not taught well. In Years 9 to 11, curriculum plans do not clearly set out the important subject content that pupils should learn and remember.

Year 9 pupils do not study a broad range of subjects comparable with the national curriculum. This is because pupils start their GCSEs in Year 9. Pupils do not experience subjects such as music, art and history unless they opt to study them.

Leaders do not have plans in place to address this.

Teachers do not check well enough that pupils understand their learning before moving on to the next topic or activity. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about how pupils will revisit previous learning so that they remember more over time. In some subject areas, teachers do not help pupils to link their new learning with topics they have covered before. This was particularly the case in geography and history, where pupils do not achieve as well as they should. However, pupils achieve well in mathematics. In this subject, pupils have regular opportunities to revisit previous learning.

Teachers know what they need to do to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils' needs are generally well met. However, a few parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, do not feel that the school gives these pupils the support that they need.

Governors visit the school regularly. They have a range of expertise and undertake regular training. Governors regularly ask leaders challenging questions about pupils' behaviour and attendance. In this way, they have checked that leaders are improving these areas of the school's work. However, governors have not challenged leaders well enough to improve the quality of education.

Governors and leaders are considerate of the well-being of staff. Staff appreciate the range of initiatives introduced to reduce their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are aware of the risks that pupils face in the local community. They ensure that pupils are prepared to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils are aware of the activities of 'county lines' gangs. Staff are alert to the signs that may show that a pupil is at risk of being criminally exploited. Pupils also understand how to keep themselves safe online. They are aware of their 'digital footprint'.

The school's safeguarding leader ensures that pupils and their families get the help that they need to stay safe. She works effectively with outside agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects and year groups, important knowledge is not retained in pupils' long-term memory. This prevents them from achieving as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to revisit the most important subject content so that they can recall it over time.
- Curriculum planning, particularly at key stage 4, is focused too much on preparing

pupils for tests and examinations. In some subjects, such as history and English, crucial content is omitted. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans precisely identify the substantive and disciplinary knowledge in each subject that pupils must learn and remember.

- Teachers' assessment is not sufficiently well focused on checking pupils' understanding. Not enough priority is given to making sure that pupils have remembered small steps in their learning so that they can perform more complex tasks. Leaders should ensure that teachers' assessment explores pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that gaps and misconceptions can be swiftly addressed.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils study a broad curriculum in Year 9. Subject content is often rushed in Years 7 and 8. Leaders should ensure that pupils learn a broad curriculum across key stage 3 that at least matches the scope of the national curriculum.
- While behaviour has improved markedly, a very few pupils do not comply with leaders' expectations. Leaders should ensure that the school's approach to managing behaviour enables all pupils to learn without interruption.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143141
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10110536
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	860
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Barton
Principal	Rebecca Hibberd
Website	www.swintonacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first section 5 inspection since the school became an academy in October 2016. The school is part of the Aston Community Education Trust (the trust).
- Since the school became an academy, there have been a number of changes in staffing, including the appointment of a new principal and vice-principal.
- The school has specialist provision for 15 pupils with autism spectrum disorder. At the time of the inspection, 11 pupils were accessing this provision.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative education provision for part of the school week at: The Chislett Centre; Rotherham Aspire Pupil Referral Unit; Jade; and Healey Trust Recycle Bikes.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average.
- The school has a very small number of Year 13 students. Most sixth-form lessons take place at Aston Academy, which is also part of the trust.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with leaders responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and personal development. The lead inspector held a discussion with representatives of the local governing body and members of the board of trustees, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation relating to the school's work to safeguard pupils. These included pupil welfare records, behaviour records and pupil attendance records. Inspectors spoke to a number of staff about the training they receive to keep pupils safe. An inspector held a telephone conversation with the local authority designated officer for child protection.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 43 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey and 92 responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Parent View. Inspectors spoke to pupils both formally and informally to get their views about the school.
- The inspection focused particularly on English, science, history and art. Other subjects were also considered as part of the inspection. Inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers.

Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John McNally	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Rogers	Ofsted Inspector

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