



Sawston Village College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110902
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278550
Inspection dates 22 February 2006 to 23 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Alan Alder LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	New Road
School category	Foundation		CB2 4BP
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01223 712777
Number on roll	1028	Fax number	01223 836680
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Polly Stanton
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. June Cannie

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sawston Village College is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16. It is slightly larger than average with 1028 pupils. The school is situated in a village to the south of Cambridge. Some 90% of pupils are from White British backgrounds and fewer than 2% speak English as an additional language. Almost 12% of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, which is below average. A little over 6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national figure. The school has been awarded specialist school status for technology.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is good and improving with outstanding features. This matches the school's own evaluation of its work. The great majority of parents are highly supportive of the school's work. The principal's leadership is outstanding. She has developed an effective team of senior leaders with whom she has brought about an energetic and rigorous approach to improving the school. The ways in which pupils are cared for and supported are outstanding. Teaching is good overall. Good systems are in place to review the progress which pupils make and to review ways of teaching to secure improvement. As a result pupils make good progress and the standards they achieve are above national averages. Their personal development is good, and in some respects outstanding. The school's status as a specialist school for technology has been used to good effect to develop the teaching of design and technology, mathematics and science and to work with other schools, both primary and secondary. There are still improvements to be made and the school recognises this. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 has only limited opportunities for studying vocational courses. Many pupils use computers to assist their learning but not all have sufficient opportunity, although no teaching was seen which was unsatisfactory, there is still some variation in quality. There has been rapid development since the new principal took up her post. Significant improvements have taken place in the way pupils are cared for, the quality of leadership, and in aspects of personal development. The school's leaders understand how it should continue to develop and their plans are robust and well considered. This shows that there is good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 so that there is a greater range of vocational courses.
- Raise the quality of teaching so more is of the standard of the best.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use computers in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards pupils reach at the end of year 11 are significantly higher than national averages. When pupils join the school in Year 7 their standards are broadly average, so the progress they make is good. The school achieves its targets. Boys and girls of all abilities make good progress, particularly those girls who reach higher than average standards at the end of their primary schools. The progress of pupils whose performance was previously considered average or below average also make good progress. Pupils with statements and learning difficulties make very good progress. More able boys make less progress than other pupils in the school and do less well than they would be expected to in some GCSE subjects, including modern foreign languages. However they make better progress than similar pupils nationally. By the end of Year 9 the results of the national tests show that pupils make good progress in science and

satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. A significant number of more able pupils did not make enough progress in English. However inspectors noted that in the lessons they saw, this situation is improving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Most pupils enjoy school and have a positive approach to their work. Behaviour is good around the school site and in the great majority of lessons. Attendance is satisfactory overall, and good for the majority of pupils as a result of the school's efforts. Pupils are proud of their school and develop positive relationships with teachers and peers. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel safe, and report that incidents of bullying are infrequent and dealt with effectively. They understand how to behave safely both in and out of school. Many pupils make an important contribution to the work of the school and the wider community by undertaking voluntary work. For example, a sizable number of Year 10 pupils help Year 7 pupils with reading and listen to any problems they might have. This significantly enhances pupils' confidence and awareness of social issues. They take the initiative in many of the school's developments that directly affect them, for example in the introduction of healthier school meals. This reflects their commitment to adopting more healthy lifestyles. Pupils are prepared well for the world of work through careers education and work experience, supplemented by days devoted to learning about enterprise. Their basic skills such as literacy and numeracy are good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. A significant proportion of lessons are good or outstanding. There is some variability in quality which the school has identified and is taking action to tackle. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported effectively in lessons. In the best lessons teachers use a wide variety of activities that engage the pupils, motivate and inspire them. Activities and methods are based on a clear understanding of what the pupils know and need to do to progress. Several teachers make highly effective use of resources such as interactive whiteboards to add interest to their teaching, although some pupils do not get enough opportunities to use computers to support and enhance their learning. Pupils are helped to understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work by evaluating their own and others' work in subjects such as English and physical education. The use of this strategy is uneven and recognised by the school as an aspect for continuing action and improvement. Where teaching is less effective, the purpose of the lesson is not made clear to pupils, and teachers do not use questions skilfully enough, either to evaluate understanding or to identify from this the next stage of each pupil's learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In Year 7, the work which pupils do follows on very well from their primary school work. This is a result of the considerable efforts the school makes. Pupils say that it helps to maintain interest and a sense of challenge. Pupils of all ages have a very wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities to choose from, and many pupils of all ages take part. The five days set aside for personal, social and health education are generally well regarded and are relevant to pupils. The school council offers good insight into the democratic process of the world beyond school. All statutory requirements are met, apart from the teaching of careers in Year 7. A good range of work-related training courses is offered for some pupils in association with a local college. There is also a vocational course in Years 10 and 11 which serves pupils well and is relevant to their aspirations. However, the course offered attracts mostly girls, which means that some boys who would benefit from vocational education are less well catered for.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The way the school cares for its pupils is outstanding, and in particular the co-ordinated links with a range of outside agencies which help pupils by providing support for the whole family. Excellent work with local primary schools ensures that pupils, including the most vulnerable, feel safe and cared for when they transfer to the school. This is an area of strength. Good arrangements for child protection are in place and staff are given clear direction in how to deal with such issues. Teaching assistants are well trained and their work monitored, ensuring that the support they give pupils is of very good quality. Thorough records of pupils' progress are kept and parents are well informed. The information is also used well to identify and help any pupils who may be doing less well than they should be. Pupils are given very clear guidance in making choices at 14 and 16. The very rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils in all years say they feel safe and supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Inspectors judge leadership and management to be outstanding, an even higher rating than the school's own modest self-evaluation. The principal leads the school outstandingly well. Highly effective teamwork ensures her vision is fully shared with colleagues, who aim to provide education of high quality to meet all pupils' needs equally well. Consequently, pupils make increasingly good progress and act responsibly. Managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the school's performance with exceptional thoroughness. For example, the quality of teaching is closely scrutinised and very helpful coaching ensures good practice is shared so that consistent quality can be achieved. The school's management does not accept underperformance. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They monitor

standards and the quality of education well and pursue further improvement vigorously. Funds are exceptionally well managed. The school has been undeterred by earlier funding difficulties from working to improve its performance and the quality of education. The school makes the most of its staff, resources and accommodation. The school has a relatively low income and it provides excellent value for money. This specialist technology college has excellent links with primary and secondary partner schools, for example to raise standards and further the impressive quality of care enjoyed by pupils. It is soon to take on an additional specialism. The issues from the last inspection have been dealt with very well. The leadership of the school has not only the capacity but also a powerful resolve, to develop the school further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so helpful during our inspection. We met and spoke to quite a number of you both in meetings as well as in lessons. It is clear that you enjoy school and you like the way it has developed in the last few years. A very high proportion of parents were also very complimentary. I'd now like to let you know what we found. We thought the way the school looks after you was outstanding. We were particularly impressed by the way new pupils in Year 7 are helped to settle down quickly. Close attention is paid to how well you are learning and your school works hard to improve attendance. There is a lot of good teaching. As a result you make good progress in your work and your GCSE results are good. We were also impressed by the ways in which older pupils help younger ones, for example with reading, and how the school council takes responsibility for helping to make the school even better. There are not many recommendations we need to make for improvements because things are going well. We feel that the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 should offer more opportunities for you to study vocational courses if you wish to. We think that being able to use computers to help you learn should be more widespread. Finally the school's work to make teaching even better is an important thing to continue. Keep up the very good work and thanks again for your help.