



Swalcliffe Park School Trust

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123331
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281446
Inspection dates 8 November 2005 to 9 November 2005
Reporting inspector Melvyn Blackband AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Swalcliffe
School category	Non-maintained		Banbury
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		OX15 5EP
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01295780302
Number on roll	49	Fax number	01295780006
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs C Hutton
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Mr R Hooper

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 19	8 November 2005 - 9 November 2005	281446

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Swalcliffe Park School is a non-maintained charitable trust. The school stands in extensive grounds in a small village to the west of Banbury. It provides residential education and care for up to 57 boys between 11 and 19 years. All pupils have statements of special educational needs which describe their social or emotional and behavioural needs. A significant number of pupils are within the autistic spectrum. Other pupils have different development disorders including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Most pupils are of white British origin but a very small number are from minority ethnic groups. None are at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Swalcliffe Park has accurately evaluated itself as a good school. Pupils enjoy being there and make outstanding improvement in their personal development. Parents are happy for their sons to attend, knowing they are safe, free from bullying or intimidation and are making good progress. Most pupils join the school with a history of inability to adapt to school life and with low attainment. By Year 11 most pupils have caught up with mainstream pupils. Achievement is good and could be outstanding when the school has developed better target-setting to ensure each pupil works to his full potential. The achievement of post 16 pupils is very good. Pupils throughout the school are taught by committed and knowledgeable staff. There is an interesting and wide ranging curriculum. The school provides an exceptionally good range of extra activities. These involve pupils in the local and wider community and give opportunities to be independent and to take responsibility for their own actions. Pupils are very well supported and cared for adding to the calm atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect. Careers guidance is good and very good in the post 16 provision. The school is well led and managed at all levels. There is a good capacity to improve and there has been good progress since the previous inspection. The headteacher provides clear leadership and is an excellent role model for his staff. He is well supported by a competent senior team. The school is well aware of its own strengths and weaknesses and has the drive and determination to meet the continual challenges to improve. The school's finances are well managed, daily routines run efficiently and the school gives good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Post 16 pupils are getting a very high quality of education. They are particularly well prepared for leaving school. Pupils benefit from individually constructed timetables which incorporate elements of basic skills tuition, work experience and college courses. The pupils are able to reach their potential in a wide variety of GCSE and vocational qualifications. Most pupils achieve extremely well because their learning is very well managed. They are closely monitored and college placements are carefully structured to their needs. The pupils' personal development is exceptionally good. Their independence skills are strongly promoted. Pupils gain confidence in their own abilities. This adds to their motivation to succeed and has a very positive effect on the level of their achievements. The department is very well led and managed.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 1

Boarding provision is very good. The accommodation facilities are well maintained and modern and there are well trained and committed care staff. Management of the provision is very good. A recent inspection by the Commission for Social Care has confirmed that the facility is substantially above the national minimum standards for

care provision. Pupils are safe, while at the same time they are encouraged to take as much responsibility as they can manage. Pupils are taken out into the community regularly and make a positive contribution to local groups. Staff manage an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities which pupils' improving behaviour entitles them to take part in. Relationships between teachers and care staff are exemplary, for instance in their use of verbal and written records and in the way that pupils are able to contribute to the monitoring of their own care plans both at school and in the boarding accommodation.

What the school should do to improve further

* Establish targets for pupils that are securely linked to teachers' planning and assessment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Standards are good and pupils achieve well. Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils are now attaining a range of GCSE subjects and grades which are comparable with those of pupils in mainstream schools. Pupils at post 16 achieve very well, so well, in fact, that two pupils who recently left the school are about to go to university. Pupils often make very good progress in relation to their attainment when they enter the school. The quality of assessment when pupils first start is very good and the school collects annual relevant data on the pupils' performance. This is compared nationally with similar schools and with mainstream schools and enables teachers to accurately predict the pupils' success in GCSE and Entry Level courses in Year 11. The school sets stringent targets for continual improvement in GCSE results. The data is not yet used efficiently enough in setting short term learning targets for pupils. The pupils' behaviour targets are very effective and have a positive impact on the excellent progress pupils make in their personal development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Inspection confirmed the evaluation of the school that the personal development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are quickly integrated into the life of the school through very good induction procedures and most pupils rapidly make a substantial improvement in their behaviour. This reflects the school's emphasis on moral and social values and the very strong procedures to manage behaviour. Pupils are punctual to lessons and settle well to their work. Many earn a high level of trust and responsibility, such as the freedom to make unsupervised visits to the town. Pupils at post 16 quickly gain extra confidence through the many opportunities to experience adult college life. There is a calm atmosphere because pupils know what is expected of them. The pupils' personal development is very well supported by the good communication between

care staff and teachers which ensures that each boy's welfare is carefully managed throughout the day and into the evening sessions. Pupils gain spiritually from the beautiful school grounds. They benefit from cultural experiences through themed school days such as 'Australia Day' and work on the lives of less fortunate people in other countries, often linked to charity appeals. The pupils are safe. The school maintains rigorous monitoring of bullying incidents and as a result pupils report that they feel secure and confident. The school ensures a healthy diet for the pupils along with a high level of physical activity and there is good provision for sex and relationships education. The pupils respond very maturely when they visit the community both in recreation and as part of the taught curriculum. As they get older they gain a good understanding of citizenship and the world of work and economic understanding, for example in the well organised work experience programme. Parents are very pleased with the improvement in their sons' behaviour and self-confidence. Typically parents feel that 'my son has made much better educational and social/emotional progress than in his previous secondary school'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning is good and has maintained standards since the previous inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and they know their pupils well. This enables them to plan interesting well paced lessons. Teachers are appropriately developing their expertise in teaching pupils with autism. There are very good relationships between staff teams. The very competent teaching assistants support individual pupils very well. Pupils like and respect their teachers and teaching assistants, so they work hard and do their best. Pupils in Year 11 made very good progress in geography through well organised explanations and questions by the teacher. They were able to explain in great detail about the reasons for development of towns and other settlements. Teachers' use of assessment is variable. In the best lessons, for instance in the well organised literacy sessions, pupils' work is continually assessed and this helps teachers to plan effectively for each pupil. In other lessons teachers lack the detailed knowledge about pupils' progress which would inform their planning and help them raise the achievement of the learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils enjoy well constructed, purposeful and interesting activities within clearly structured national curriculum programmes. Pupils have the chance to gain GCSEs and other qualifications in each subject. There is a wide range of learning opportunities supplemented by the exceptional variety of extra activities. Pupils are taken into the

community at every opportunity, teaching them that new things can be learned in all sorts of situations. The school's curriculum for personal development is well supported by the boarding provision. The pupils socialise, eat and play together and care staff place great emphasis on pupils' safety and healthy lifestyle. The school's evaluation that the residential aspect of the pupils' education plays a significant part in their enjoyment of school and in their achievements is confirmed by the inspection. Provision for learning about work and economic well-being is developing but not yet securely established as part of the curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 16. There is good provision for careers education. Preparation for life after school is well managed, particularly for post 16 pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care provided by the school is outstanding. Secure child protection procedures are in place, regularly updated and they are understood by all staff. Health and safety monitoring is exemplary. Pupils feel safe and this makes a good contribution to their enjoyment and continued achievement in school. Pupils are guided appropriately towards a choice of GCSE subjects through the school tracking procedures. Each pupil has a key worker and pastoral tutor to refer to if necessary. Pupils are fully involved in their Annual Review discussions and in setting their behavioural targets. The staff ensures that the pupils are consulted about their welfare wherever possible. The pupils receive exceptionally good support in improving their behaviour and dealing with social or emotional difficulties. There is a very good standard of careers guidance and support in making the transition to college or employment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher shows outstanding leadership and commitment to the school. He is determined to uphold the highest standards of teaching, behaviour and care. He is supported by a strong senior team. Management at all levels is good and this has helped to maintain the school's rate of improvement. Governors have a grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide effective oversight, particularly in financial management. As a result, resources are good. The role of subject leaders has been revised since the previous inspection and they are now more effective in developing the curriculum. This has led to higher expectations of pupils' achievement. Staff relationships are good. Teachers and support staff feel fully consulted, involved and valued. There are secure arrangements for monitoring their performance. Staff development is well organised and relevant to the school's needs. For instance the headteacher and other staff are currently studying for advanced qualifications in autism and all care staff are encouraged to follow NVQ courses in child development or for higher level courses in health and social care. Good use is made of assessment data to plan improvement in curriculum subjects and to track attainment, although

teachers should create clearer academic targets for pupils. Managers have established mainly informal procedures to help them monitor, evaluate and improve on aspects of the school's performance. The school development plan is understood by all and provides a good basis for improvement. Parents feel able to contribute to school development. The school has convincingly demonstrated its capacity to improve provision since the previous inspection and the school remains in a good condition to maintain this improvement.

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	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

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

Not long ago I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether there was anything I could suggest that would make the school better. You made me very welcome and I enjoyed meeting some of you. Thank you and well done!

I was with you for two days. That was long enough for me to realise that Swalcliffe Park is a good school. One of the reasons is that you make very good progress in learning to behave sensibly and in trying to get on with others. I particularly enjoyed visiting you in the classrooms and seeing the good work you were doing. There were lots of other things that I liked. Here are a few: * You obviously enjoy school and do well * The many different people working at the school do their best to look after you * You are able to be as independent as possible and to take responsibility for your own actions * You are learning about the community and about working life. This will help you when you leave school.

One of the things I felt would make the school better is if teachers gave you clearer targets to aim for in your work in lessons. It would be even better if you could help in creating those targets.

Best wishes

Mel Blackband

Lead Inspector