



# Swavesey Village College

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 110863  
**Local Authority** CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
**Inspection number** 288799  
**Inspection dates** 18–19 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Alder HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>College address</b>	Gibraltar Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Swavesey, Swavesey
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB24 4RS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01954 230366
<b>Number on roll (college)</b>	1175	<b>Fax number</b>	01954 230437
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Fox
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Martin Bacon
<b>Date of previous college inspection</b>	23 April 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	18–19 October 2006	288799

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## **Introduction**

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

## **Description of the college**

Swavesey Village College is a specialist science school, located in a village to the north of Cambridge. Its role has grown significantly in recent years as a result of changes to its catchment area. The proportion of its students who have learning difficulties and disabilities, including those who have Statements of Special Educational Needs is low, as is the proportion that are eligible for free school meals. A very small number of students speak English as an additional language.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the college

### Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school, with a number of outstanding features. The leadership and management provided by the principal and college management team are outstanding. A wide range of recent changes are having a marked effect on students' learning and well-being.

The curriculum is outstanding. It enables students to study courses that they find stimulating and which challenge them. For example, there are opportunities for significant numbers of students to take some GCSE examinations in Year 9. Those who do so have a high degree of success. In Years 10 and 11 a well taught construction course is taken by students whose interests lie in practical work-based learning. Some parents have commented that the curricular opportunities have revitalised their children's commitment to school. There is also an impressive range of after school clubs which are well attended and enjoyed as well as a very good range of educational visits. As a result, students are well-motivated, enjoy school and attend regularly.

The students' commitment to learning is stimulated by the good teaching they receive. Lessons proceed at a good pace and involve interesting and varied activities. As a result achievement is good and has improved over time. Standards in Key Stage 3 and 4 are above average. In a small minority of lessons though, students of widely differing ability are not catered for well enough. The individual education plans for students with learning difficulties do not give sufficient guidance to teachers, though overall they do make good progress academically. There is a sophisticated system to ensure that there are challenging targets for student achievement. This is backed up by a regular assessment programme which checks that progress is as it should be. A recently introduced system, based on an enhanced role for form tutors, is good at following up those students who for any reason have fallen behind. However, the marking of students' work is not as effective as it should be in helping them understand how to improve and the school does not provide information to parents about students' progress in their study of citizenship.

The school helps students achieve outstanding levels of personal development and well-being. They enjoy the many opportunities to exercise responsibility and to develop their leadership skills. The many trips abroad provide practical experience of how others live and work. The strong approach to the management of behaviour, combined with the varied curriculum, the good quality of teaching and the good support provided by outside agencies has ensured that the number of students being excluded is low. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last year.

Monitoring and evaluation is thorough and accurate although despite this the targets for 2005 were not achieved.

A recent major change has been to introduce mixed age tutor groups. Students have reported very favourably on this and say that it has helped them to build good relationships with students from other years, and that the small amount of bullying has reduced further as a result. One student talked about 'feeling part of a family'.

The change has also made the role of the tutor more effective in supporting students' academic achievement.

### **What the college should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that more lessons are of an outstanding or good quality.
- Make better use of marking so that students know how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the plans for the support of students with learning disabilities are improved.
- Ensure that students' learning in citizenship is reported upon to parents.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The results from the 2005 Year 9 national tests and GCSE examinations show that standards are good and improving. Students make good progress because when they enter the school in Year 7 their standards are broadly in line with those found nationally. In their GCSEs, the progress made by both girls and boys was good, as it was for those with learning difficulties. The provisional 2006 results show standards are continuing to improve, though the challenging targets set by the governing body have not been met. The data provided by the school indicates that the rate of progress is increasing and that made by boys in the 2006 GCSE examinations is outstanding. Evidence from students' work seen during the inspection confirms that standards like that of achievement are above average and that good progress is made in lessons.

In 2005 science and mathematics standards in 2005 were good, although targets were not achieved. The 2006 provisional figures show that a clear and strong trend of improvement is continuing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Students demonstrate outstanding personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They work co-operatively in groups and show respect for each other's feelings and also for the contributions their peers make to lessons as well as to the school community. Students are mostly polite and courteous. Any misbehaviour is generally confined to the small number of lessons where they are not set appropriate tasks. Behaviour around the school is considerate and sensible and students say they feel safe and secure. The school's staff deals effectively with the rare incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment. Students know what is right and wrong and discuss moral issues with clarity and sensitivity.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and some practice is outstanding. Lessons proceed at a good pace and involve interesting and varied activities. As a result students are challenged and, in the best lessons, inspired. They respond with enthusiasm and produce work which is generally of a high quality. Teachers often use questions well to test student's knowledge and provide them with good opportunities to express their views. However, in some lessons the purpose of the session was not always made clear and so students are not always sufficiently aware of what they should be concentrating on.

In lessons where students are set by ability, the work usually matches their aptitude very well. However in the less effective lessons too little attention is given to meeting the learning needs of students of different abilities. The quality of marking and assessment is too variable. Whilst there is some exemplary practice, not all teachers mark work regularly enough and students are not always sufficiently clear about what they need to do to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Its strength is its capacity to provide students with the right type of course at the right level of difficulty to suit their interests and to challenge them. For example, in Year 9, some students take a GCSE in science and in media studies. Further challenge is provided by the option of studying two foreign languages in the time normally devoted to one. There is also a rich variety of extra-curricular activities and visits especially in the arts and in sport. In Years 10 and 11 students are offered a good range of both GCSEs and vocational courses. These include a successful diploma in construction which has proved highly motivating for the students and is recognised locally as a model of good practice. Provision is further extended with a range of vocational qualifications at the local college which prepare students for future study and work. All students study a course in information communications and technology which leads to a formal qualification and which provides good preparation for the world of work. There is a rich range of extra-curricular opportunities.

Students' personal, social and health education are taught well, partly through a number of well managed and effective conference days. These contribute significantly to students' development, as young adults, responsible citizens. and leaders. Some tutorial periods are used well but others less effective in delivering aspects of the programme because sessions are not as structured as they could to be. There is currently no formal reporting of students' progress in citizenship to parents.

In science a very good, broad range of courses is available including the separate sciences, an advanced course on the public understanding of science, as well as more conventional courses.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Students receive good care, guidance and support. Procedures for child protection are securely in place. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The school's student support office, and the excellent partnership which has been fostered with external agencies through the 'Caring Professionals Group', enable the more vulnerable and challenging students to receive the individual guidance and support they need.

Arrangements to support students at risk of exclusion are excellent. The school is generally responsive to the views of students and their parents. These views have influenced the way the school is organised. As a result there have been improvements with regard to anti-social behaviour, the wearing of uniform and stronger relationships between older and younger students. Students are very actively supported to become mature and responsible members of the school community as; for example, house and school council members and leaders of after school clubs. A very good system for tracking students' academic progress is in place. This helps students to understand how they can achieve their individual targets and is used effectively by teachers to identify students who need specific additional academic support. However the individual education plans to help students with learning difficulties lack detail and do not meet current requirements.

The guidance that students receive throughout their time at school in relation to courses and careers is excellent. The procedures for helping students to transfer from primary school are good, as is the advice offered to those about to embark on sixth form study.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal, deputy and college management team provide very strong, effective leadership resulting in improvements in the school's performance in the last three years but have yet to have a full impact on pupils' achievement. Leaders of department and those with pastoral responsibilities show strong personal qualities. They motivate and support their colleagues well, and ensure that school policies are implemented. Self-evaluation is very thorough and involves teachers, students and parents. It has led to clear identification of where the school can improve. Good monitoring and evaluation are used to make sure the changes which are introduced are carried out and are effective.

Governors are much involved in strategic decisions and are knowledgeable about their school. This allows them to support the school from a well-informed position and to promote it in the wider community with real conviction. The school's improvement plan is ambitious and well thought through.

Very good use is being made of the school's specialist science status, which is well led and managed. New resources and technologies, such as interactive whiteboards, are

having a good effect on the development of teaching and learning. Primary schools have benefited from the school's science specialism, and a locally-based pharmaceutical company has praised highly the seminar the school recently gave to its administrative, human resources and finance staff on current developments in their industry.

The school is making good progress, despite its comparatively low funding in the last year. Value for money is excellent. The areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have been acted upon well, and the capacity for improvement is outstanding.



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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>College Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this college require special measures?	No
Does this college require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 October 2006

Dear Students

Swavesey Village College, Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB4 5RS

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful during our inspection. We met and spoke to quite a number of you when we visited. Your comments were very useful.

Your school is good and, because it is very well led and managed, it is improving further. One of its outstanding features is the curriculum, which provides a very good range of courses and caters well for the variety of abilities and interests that different students have. We also found that your personal development is outstanding. When we spoke with you we were impressed by your confidence and maturity. This is also evident from the way you behave in lessons and around the school. Your attitude to learning is outstanding, helped by the good quality teaching you receive and also by the curriculum, including the extensive range of visits and trips. You do well in Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations. If you slip behind the targets which you have been set, there are good ways to help you to get back to where you should be.

Your school's commitment to further improvement is strong and it takes good actions to find out what needs to improve. Our judgement is that when your work is marked there should be more guidance to you on what you can do to improve; more lessons could be of an outstanding or good quality; plans to help students with learning difficulties should be better and the progress you make in citizenship should be reported to your parents.

Best wishes for your future

Alan Alder

Her Majesty's Inspector.