

# Swanmore College of Technology

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116424
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312303
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Angela Corbett

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1303
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jane Rose / Mr Julian LaHive
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Annette Hillier
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	New Road Swanmore Southampton SO32 2RB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01489 892256
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Swanmore College of Technology is a larger than average community school situated in the village of Swanmore and serves a wide semi-rural area. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is very low. The majority of students are of White British background and there are very few students who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including statements, is below the national average but increasing; the most significant groups are for moderate learning and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The college has specialist status in technology. The college has also achieved Sportsmark, Investors in People and Enhanced Healthy School awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The college provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students in a caring and inclusive environment. Most students enjoy college life and the wide variety of activities offered, particularly in performing arts, although access is often a problem because of the rural nature of the college. Students benefit from a good curriculum, which is increasingly well matched to their needs and from good information and communication technology (ICT) resources.

Standards are above average in all years. Key Stage 3 students make good progress and the results of Year 9 national tests in 2007 were just above average in English and well above in mathematics and science. At Key Stage 4, in 2007 more students than the national average gained at least 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE. However, there was variation in performance between subjects. The college has been working to address this through targeted support for some departments. Work observed during the inspection and the college's monitoring and tracking procedures show that current students are making better progress and examination results this year are expected to improve, particularly in the underperforming subjects. Progress overall is therefore satisfactory.

Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, there is some variation both between and within different subjects. Most students have positive attitudes to learning. In the less successful lessons, activities do not engage or fully challenge students because they are insufficiently linked to their needs and abilities or learning objectives are not focused on what students are expected to learn. As a result, some students do not make expected progress. Students are well informed about the levels and grades they are working at but the quality of marking of their work is inconsistent and does not always inform them about how they can improve.

Students receive good care and support through the house system. There is little bullying. Although some parents raised this as a concern, students said that it is dealt with effectively when it occurs. Students say that they feel safe and that they appreciate the guidance given to them by both staff and peer mentors, a group of older students who have been trained to support children in the younger years. Students make a good contribution to the college community. They take on a range of positions of responsibility including acting as representatives on the college's councils, or as prefects and librarians. Students have a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They develop above average basic skills and they are well prepared for the next steps in their learning or the world of work. Their personal development is good as a result of good teaching programmes and visitors from the community who also help them understand their heritage and appreciate cultural diversity.

Many parents who sent parental questionnaires back to the inspection team expressed a wide range of concerns about the college. These included issues relating to staffing and use of temporary teachers, poor communication and poor behaviour both in and out of lessons. Inspectors agree that there is some low level disruption by a few students in some lessons where teaching is less effective but behaviour overall is satisfactory. The college is actively working to address concerns over communication raised by parents, particularly through the new virtual learning environment. Evidence from a range of other sources as well as the parental questionnaires indicated that many parents were positive about the college.

The college's leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and her senior team take action to secure improvement, although its impact is not always sufficiently focused to ensure all students reach their full potential. The college is collecting data about students

and this is supporting senior leaders well in their drive to raise achievement. However it does not always sufficiently influence the work of teachers. Considerable staffing difficulties over the last three years, for a variety of reasons, have impacted on the effectiveness of house and curriculum management restructure, college improvement actions and consequently student achievement. At the time of inspection, more stable staffing, the clarification of leaders' roles and responsibilities and an effective focus on raising achievement show a sound capacity to improve further.

The college's technology specialist subjects are science, mathematics, design and technology, in which standards by the end of Key Stage 4 are above the national average. However, the college is not fully utilising the specialism to raise standards or promote students' wider knowledge and understanding of technologies. The college has focused the impact of specialist status more on provision than student outcomes. Examples are the provision of good ICT facilities throughout the college, separate sciences as an option at Key Stage 4 and links with local primary schools including support for ICT, master classes for able students and software provision for the less able. Students also have opportunities to participate in technology related activities beyond the classroom, for example, a Navy engineering project or visits to a local computer company.

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

- Raise the achievement of all students in Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that all lessons are consistently good and that students are more actively involved and challenged in the learning process.
- Ensure that students' progress and their work is effectively assessed by teachers and that students know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Provide more focus on the impact of college improvement actions in relation to student achievement.
- Develop and improve communication with parents.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 3, overall attainment in the last five years has been consistently high. In 2007, it was particularly high in mathematics and science where more students achieved at the highest levels but just above average in English. This represented achievement that was satisfactory in English but good in mathematics and science. Across all subjects at Key Stage 3, boys performed better than girls. At Key Stage 4 in 2007, although the percentage who gained 5 A\*-C GCSE passes including English and mathematics remained well above the national average, there has been a decline since 2005. This was particularly linked to poor performance in English, which the college has worked to address with some success. Progress for the majority of students was satisfactory and good for some. However, some students did not make sufficient progress, in particular, a small minority of boys who significantly underachieved. The evidence indicates that students are now making better progress in the underperforming subjects, particularly in English. This is due to focused support and more stable staffing across the college. However, there is still evidence of underachievement at grades C and above. The achievement of students identified

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall, although some students, make better progress than others, particularly those in Key Stage 3.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Most students enjoy college and are keen to learn, especially where their lessons are lively and interesting. Attendance is now above the national average. Behaviour in lessons and around the college is satisfactory, although inspection evidence supported some students' and parents' concerns about low-level disruption in some lessons. Students' overall spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good, although opportunities for spiritual reflection are more limited. Most students appreciate the college's messages about healthy eating and many take advantage of the healthy food choices available to them. Students say they feel safe in college and adopt safe work practices. The college has taken effective steps to promote the student voice through the house and college councils and senate, which is highly regarded by its elected members. A few students felt that their views are not taken fully into account.

The house system enables students in different year groups to work well together. For example, within different tutor groups, older students welcome Year 7 into their tutor groups whilst some act as peer mentors. Students make a good contribution to the community, for example by participation in competitions or involvement in house charitable activities or college performances. A number of students also perform in a drama group, jazz band or choir that give concerts across the wider community. Most develop good skills to prepare them for future economic well-being through a comprehensive programme of enterprise and work related activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but there is variation both within and between subjects. Some good and outstanding teaching was seen but the college is not making the most of opportunities to disseminate this good practice. In the best lessons, teachers set high expectations, and provide good pace and challenge using a range of activities that address the differing needs of students. The overall approach to planning lessons is inconsistent across the college. Teachers know their students well and have a wide range of information on attainment. However this is not always used to effectively inform planning or teaching. For example, learning objectives are not clarified nor sufficiently linked to examination or national curriculum criteria. As a result, some students, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are not achieving as well as they might. Assessment and marking are satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies both within and between subjects. Students are aware of their levels or target grades but clear advice on how to improve is not well enough developed to raise achievement in some lessons. During the inspection low level disruption was observed in some lessons often as a result of poor challenge or activities that did not fully engage students in their learning. Teachers vary in how effectively they manage the poor behaviour of a few students within their lessons. As a result, in a minority of lessons students did not make the expected progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. The needs of students are addressed through a comprehensive range of subjects and other activities. In Years 10 and 11 students are provided with an increasingly flexible curriculum, including access to some vocational subjects. For example, higher attaining students have the opportunity to enter GCSE mathematics early whilst others have access to college courses or additional work experience. Through specialist status, students can study separate sciences and the majority opt for a design and technology subject at Key Stage 4. There are a wide variety of opportunities within the curriculum for students to develop economic and business understanding and enterprise capabilities. An Enterprise Day for Year 9 was very well received by students and successfully developed a range of work related skills. There is a good range of out of lesson trips, visits and activities including those in sports and performing arts, as well as very good provision for supporting students in the lead up to public examinations. There is good off site provision for gifted and talented students although the college has not yet fully addressed provision for these students in lessons. ICT provision is good. Students are developing good skills and ICT is used very effectively to enhance learning in most subjects. Students are positive about the virtual learning environment that is very effectively being developed to support learning, particularly out of normal college hours.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Students receive good care and support and academic guidance is satisfactory. Procedures for ensuring students' safety are good with efficient staff recruitment arrangements and effective safeguarding practices. Students tell the inspection team that they feel confident in approaching staff if they have any problems, and they generally feel valued and respected. Data is closely analysed so that leaders and managers can track academic progress. Students know their targets and current attainment levels well through regular progress reports. However, the wealth of assessment data is not always used consistently well by teachers across the college to inform their teaching and provide students with effective and clear guidance onto the next steps of their learning in order to raise achievement. Support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, and for those who are looked after, is good and this allows them to match the progress made by others across the college. All elements of the student support structure, including the college's liaison with external agencies, are effective in ensuring that students receive good personal advice throughout their college career.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher supported by the leadership team, has established a clear and appropriate direction for college improvement. Although there are inaccuracies in the college's overall self-evaluation, a range of procedures for review and evaluation have been put in place to monitor impact. These do not always sufficiently focus on student achievement nor has their impact been fully realised, particularly at Key Stage 4. For example, the college has appropriately focused on improving the use of data and the quality of assessment to improve students'

progress in lessons. However not all teachers understand clearly what they should do in lessons to achieve this.

The house system that links curriculum and pastoral management has been introduced to distribute responsibility more widely across the college. Curriculum leaders within the house system are becoming increasingly accountable for the performance of teachers and students in their subjects. Although teaching and learning are monitored through lesson observations, work scrutiny and student interviews there is insufficient focus on students' progress when judging the overall quality of lessons. The college's leaders are effective in promoting the personal development and well-being of all students.

The college has effectively used technology specialist status to improve ICT provision across the college, particularly in the specialist subjects, and to develop good links with local primary schools. Governors are both knowledgeable and supportive of the college's work and fulfil their legal responsibilities. They are becoming increasingly effective in challenging the college to improve. In the context of satisfactory student achievement, the college provides satisfactory value for money.



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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

18 June 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Swanmore College of Technology, Southampton, SO32 2RB

On behalf of your inspectors, I would like to let you know that we enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the college. We think that Swanmore is providing you with a satisfactory education and many benefits from technology college status.

We hope that you will take the time to read the full report but I have highlighted the key points below.

- You appreciate the good ICT provision and opportunities made possible through specialist status in technology.
- The standards you achieve are above the national average and you make satisfactory progress in your time at the college.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and good or better in some lessons.
- Your behaviour overall is satisfactory, although a few of you disrupt learning in some lessons.
- You enjoy working with students in different year groups through the house system.
- Many of you take on many positions of responsibility, such as student representatives on the college and house councils, librarians, prefects and peer counsellors.
- Most of you make the most of the wide range of activities, events and trips that are provided to help you develop both personally and academically.

To improve things further, we have asked the college to:

- raise the achievement of all students in Key Stage 4
- ensure that your lessons are consistently good and you are more actively involved and challenged in the learning process
- ensure that your progress and work is effectively assessed and that you know what you need to do to improve your work
- provide more focus on the impact of college improvement actions
- develop and improve communication with your parents.

You can help by focusing on your learning both in and out of lessons, behaving well in lessons and making the most of the variety of opportunities offered.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett

Lead Inspector