

Swanmore College of Technology

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116424
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357962
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Ken Bush

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Baldwin
Headteacher	Annette Hillier
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
School address	New Road Southampton SO32 2RB
Telephone number	01489 892256
Fax number	01489 891453
Email address	enquiries@swanmore-sec.hants.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 41 lessons taken by 40 teachers. In addition, meetings were held with students, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school improvement plan and records of students' progress. They also considered the views of 71 students, 40 staff and 390 parents and carers as shown in questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment and progress in the previous academic year and for the current Year 11
- the quality of learning and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- trends in the standards of behaviour and attendance
- the progress of the school's work in improving teaching and learning and improving attainment since the previous inspection
- the impact of the creation of the house system.

Information about the school

In this larger-than-average sized, rural, comprehensive school, almost all students are from a White British background. The number of students whose first language is not English is well below the national average, as is the percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The most commonly identified of these needs relate to moderate learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A very small number of 14–16 year-olds currently undertake vocational courses as part of a local consortium. The school has had specialist technology status since September 2002 and has also achieved enhanced Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Swanmore provides students with a good and improving standard of education. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and other senior leaders have successfully introduced a range of systems and procedures that have led to a more rigorous and strategic approach to improving outcomes for students. High-quality and accurate self-evaluation procedures enable leaders and the governing body to know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well. Ambitious, well-focused and robust plans are in place to address areas in need of further improvement and these are strongly endorsed by staff and the wider school community. These detailed and relevant improvement plans, the track record of consistently good progress over time for most students and the strong and growing impact of specialist technology status indicate good capacity for sustained improvement.

The attainment and the progress of the students who completed Key Stage 4 in 2010 was broadly in line with the previous two years. Attainment is consistently high, a continuing trend that is being maintained through the progress of current Year 11 students. Some inconsistencies in performance across subjects persist, although attainment and progress in English, mathematics and design technology are particularly strong. The progress of most groups of students is good, although the comparatively few with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not yet consistently make as rapid progress as their peers. Attendance is above the national average, reflecting students' enjoyment of learning and the school's concerted efforts to secure improvement in this area. Students' acquisition and application of work-related skills, in particular literacy and numeracy, make a strong contribution to their preparation for life beyond school and their positive outlook. The house system has made a noticeable impact, by providing a supportive environment in which all students are able to play a full part in the many activities which are offered.

Teaching and assessment are good overall and improving, although there is some variation in the quality of practice across the curriculum and for different ability groups. Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection and is generally good, except in those few lessons where students are not sufficiently engaged. The school has designed and implemented a systematic programme of continuing professional development for its staff. This is stimulating more innovative approaches to teaching, but more remains to be done to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons, for example by sharing and promoting best practice more widely and effectively. The school's work in forging

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

partnerships with other providers and agencies beyond the school is outstanding. This has had a very strong impact on supporting students' personal development and welfare and in enabling the school to make an outstanding contribution to promoting community cohesion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - ensuring lessons are more appropriately tailored to match their starting points and individual needs.
 - extending the use of the school's tracking system to enable more rigorous monitoring of their performance.
- Reduce inconsistencies in achievement and the quality of teaching across departments by:
 - providing further professional development for staff which focuses upon the characteristics of outstanding teaching and learning.
 - promoting and sharing best practice both within and beyond the school more extensively

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In the large majority of lessons seen in the inspection, students were attentive, enthusiastic and keen to do their best. Through the outcomes of their responses in the questionnaire and through discussions with inspectors, students demonstrated a very high level of satisfaction with their education at Swanmore. In particular, they appreciate the quality and consistency of support they receive from staff and opportunities to undertake new activities. In an outstanding physical education lesson seen during the inspection, Year 11 students responded with maturity, sensitivity and great enthusiasm to one of their first experiences of yoga, requiring them to actively support and coach their peers through key elements of the programme.

Achievement overall is outstanding, with no significant differences over time between the progress made by boys compared with girls or between most different groups of students and their peers. However, the progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, whilst improving very rapidly under the leadership of a new coordinator, is at present satisfactory. This is largely as a consequence of work sometimes not being adequately matched to these students' needs and interests and of insufficiently rigorous monitoring of their individual progress.

Students report that they feel safe in school and demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of issues such as e-safety. Instances of bullying are felt by students to be rare and are well handled by staff when they do occur. Students routinely show courtesy and respect for one another and are mostly polite and cooperative to staff. Indeed, the quality of relationships is a significant contributory factor to the school's positive learning

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

ethos. Most students are keen to pursue a healthy lifestyle and they conveyed to inspectors interest in, and understanding of, how to maintain a sensible diet. A majority take an active part in the wide range of extra-curricular physical activities available, which is a notable achievement given many students' reliance on public transport to and from school. Students make a positive and increasing contribution to the school and the local community, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities afforded to show initiative and demonstrate leadership qualities. A notable example showing both students' contribution to local community cohesion and the impact of the technology specialism is the 'Make the Elderly e-Literate' project.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers possess good subject knowledge, which provides a solid platform for high levels of achievement for most students. In the large majority of lessons seen during the inspection, teachers employed a variety of strategies that enthused and motivated students. While most lessons were well planned with good progression between different activities, there were a few where work was not adequately matched to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

students' capabilities or interests or were directed too much by the teacher. This was seen most frequently in lessons which included lower attaining students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good assessment practices are a feature of most successful lessons. Students are given effective oral and written feedback in most cases, and are strongly encouraged to self-assess their work and that of their peers. This is contributing to the development of a culture in which students take an increasing degree of responsibility for their own progress.

A very large majority of students enjoy their education because they are well served by the good and improving curriculum which encourages both their academic and personal development. Although only a few students are currently involved, diplomas have been successfully introduced in Key Stage 4 in partnership with a local consortium. Work-related learning programmes have made a positive contribution to improving the motivation, attendance and achievement of students whose interests and aspirations are vocationally orientated. Curriculum innovation in Key Stage 3 is at an earlier stage of development, although the HA9 project, which takes a thematic approach to the teaching of humanities and arts subjects, has been successfully introduced and is to be developed further in the present academic year. A varied programme of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum, many of which, such as STEM Club, are supported by the technology specialism.

The college's good pastoral care, supported by its effective house and vertical tutoring system, is a feature of provision highly valued by students. Information, advice and guidance are of a high quality and enable students to make well-informed choices at transition points such as the end of key stages. Support for vulnerable students is good and liaison with external agencies well managed, helping to secure high levels of engagement from students and families requiring support. Strategies to promote good attendance have had a demonstrable impact in reducing absence, especially in the last academic year. The deployment of teaching assistants has not been wholly effective in the past, but this has been addressed recently and improvements are becoming evident.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, other senior leaders and the governing body have a very clear

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

understanding of the school's current performance. Staff responses to the questionnaire collected during the inspection show their strong commitment to development. The systematic approach to school improvement, involving a wide range of stakeholders, has resulted in better outcomes for most students since the previous inspection. However, the role of middle leaders in quality assurance and the promotion of best practice with regard to what constitute outstanding teaching and learning, though improving rapidly, are not yet firmly embedded. The effectiveness of the governing body is good. The governing body discharges its responsibilities appropriately and ensures that school leaders are well supported. Governors are now developing a strong role in strategic planning and holding school leaders to account. Partnerships with parents and carers are good and improving, and the school is finding increasing success in developing strategies to engage those who are 'harder to reach', such as a through more concerted use of electronic communication. The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are vigorously promoted. Analysis of the progress of different groups is secure and there are robust plans in place to further reduce the gap in achievement between different ability groups. Procedures for ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding are well established and clearly understood by students, staff and the governing body with clear arrangements in place for monitoring policies and practices. The school's contribution to community cohesion is exceptional. It has successfully formulated, delivered and evaluated a series of coherent actions which place the school at the heart of the local, village community with a very strong sense of common identity. Formal links are now in place with an inner city comprehensive school and well-established links with a school in Nigeria continue to flourish.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was higher than for most secondary schools. A small minority were of the opinion that the school does not deal effectively with unsatisfactory behaviour, but inspection evidence was that behaviour in the school is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. A few parents and carers felt that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors spoke at length to senior leaders and members of the governing body about this and were provided with examples of where the school had responded appropriately to specific issues that had been brought to their attention.

A large majority of parents and carers are supportive of the work of the school and appreciate the efforts made by the staff and the governing body to bring about improvements. Many commented favourably on the school's ethos of high expectations and the school's strong sense of community. There was praise, too, for the increasing use of technology in communicating with parents, both through email and through the virtual learning environment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swanmore College of Technology to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 390 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1281 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	25	256	66	25	6	7	2
The school keeps my child safe	104	27	265	68	10	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	104	27	217	56	31	8	6	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	87	22	218	56	35	9	9	2
The teaching is good at this school	62	16	261	67	28	7	7	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	66	17	218	56	59	15	9	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	12	235	60	57	15	6	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	94	24	215	55	34	9	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	20	234	60	33	8	7	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	15	195	50	55	14	24	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	14	195	50	60	15	16	4
The school is led and managed effectively	60	15	215	55	45	12	28	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	103	26	215	55	36	9	8	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 September 2010

Dear Students

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

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and meeting you and were impressed with the pride most of you have in your school. The vast majority of you were very positive about most aspects of school life, for example in your responses in the questionnaires.

These are the main findings of the inspection.

- Swanmore is a good and improving school.
- Most of you are reaching high levels of attainment and making good progress.
- Teaching and assessment are both good.
- Your curriculum is good, as is the quality of care, guidance and support you receive.
- Your personal development is good overall.
- Your school is well led and managed, with good plans for how it can get even better.
- The school's specialist technology status is making a useful contribution to your education.

The headteacher agrees with the inspection team that there are areas to improve and we have asked that:

- staff help those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make progress more quickly
- teachers make sure your lessons are of a consistently high standard across the curriculum so that your progress in all subjects is as good as in the best.

Best wishes with your studies,

Yours sincerely

Ken Bush Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.