

Inspection of Swinton Academy

East Avenue, Swinton, Mexborough, South Yorkshire S64 8JW

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend this inclusive school. They are considerate to each other and to staff. Pupils routinely behave well in class and concentrate in lessons. They say that bullying rarely occurs and that if it does, teachers deal with it quickly. Pupils are taught to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. They are taught how to keep themselves safe and learn about local risks, such as those found at canals and railway lines.

The school has high expectations for pupils. Leaders want pupils to have the highest aspirations. Pupils receive a rich variety of experiences, helping them to prepare for their next steps in education, training or employment. Pupils enjoy well-planned lessons. Pupils sometimes struggle to remember some of what has been taught.

Pupils develop their reading skills through the school's 'everyone reads in class' (ERIC) strategy. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by teachers, who make sure these pupils have the same opportunities as their peers.

Pupils have warm relationships with teachers and value this strongly. In the words of one sixth-form student, 'It is the reason I decided to study here.' Pupils make meaningful contributions to school life through a school council. They have opportunities to join many clubs and activities.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have taken effective steps in improving the quality of education since the previous school inspection, in 2019. Leaders are clear that the school's curriculum should provide the highest aspirations for all pupils and improve their life chances. The curriculum prepares pupils well for life after school. Most pupils achieve well. Leaders have recognised that this is not yet consistent across all subjects. New curriculum plans and appropriate teaching strategies are addressing this.

Teachers are well trained and knowledgeable. Pupils learn to recall facts and key knowledge in each subject. There is variation in the extent to which teachers consistently support pupils to connect current learning to what they have studied previously. This limits some pupils from developing a deep body of knowledge in some subjects.

Most teachers check on what pupils know and revisit topics when needed. This is strongest in key stages 4 and 5. In key stage 3, assessment does not consistently match with what teachers aim for pupils to learn. As a result, sometimes teachers do not have a clear awareness of how younger pupils are progressing.

The provision for pupils with SEND, including those in the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, is a strength of the school. Leaders

support staff to identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately. Staff use this information to support pupils to access the curriculum successfully.

Reading is prioritised by the school. Leaders have ensured that reading is a central part of curriculum planning through the 'ERIC' strategy. The school provides comprehensive support for pupils at the earliest stages of reading and tracks their progress effectively. Some pupils do not read more widely or for pleasure, but strategies used by the school are addressing this.

The school has high expectations for students in the sixth form. Students are punctual and attend their lessons regularly. Students feel that they are part of a close knit family and have strong relationships with staff. The school offers a range of subjects matched to the needs of sixth-form students. They benefit from a strong programme of personal development that prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards learning. A new policy has recently been introduced to further improve standards of behaviour. It is too soon for leaders to evaluate the full impact of this. Most pupils attend Swinton Academy regularly. For some groups of pupils, their attendance is lower than it should be. This slows down the progress that they make through the curriculum.

The school has a comprehensive wider curriculum offer. Pupils are encouraged to think about 'big questions' that explore themes of morality. They consider empathy and how others would feel as a result of their actions. They learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy and liberty. Pupils learn about relationships and sex education. They are supported to develop responsible attitudes in this area of the curriculum.

The school provides comprehensive careers support. Pupils learn about a range of different career options. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their interests outside of lessons at various activities, clubs and events. Leaders are keen for more pupils to take full advantage of these opportunities.

Governors challenge school leaders and ensure that the school continues to improve. The multi-academy trust provides additional support to the school. Trust leaders have recently helped to re-establish the school's sixth-form provision. They are also helping to develop quality assurance at the school. Supporting staff well-being is a priority for leaders. Teachers feel that their workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-established culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders are aware of the local risks to pupils and educate pupils about these. Leaders keep detailed safeguarding records and any concerns that occur are dealt with quickly.

Staff receive regular training and know the signs that might indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. They know what to do if they have concerns.

Pupils know that they can share their worries with a trusted adult. They learn how to keep themselves safe through lessons and assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The delivery of the curriculum does not consistently help pupils to make connections between what they are currently learning and what they have learned previously. This means that pupils sometimes struggle to link knowledge together and think deeper about key concepts. Leaders should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum allows pupils to go beyond recalling facts, and allows pupils to develop a deep body of knowledge in all subjects.
- Assessment in key stage 3 is not consistently well-matched to the knowledge identified in the curriculum. This means that sometimes teachers are unclear on how pupils are progressing through the curriculum and how to support pupils to improve. Leaders should ensure that assessment in key stage 3 is closely matched to the curriculum, and that this provides clarity on the progress that pupils are making.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143141
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10268344
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	990
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	81
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Barton
Associate Principal	James Graham
Website	www.swintonacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal has been in post for three years.
- The school is part of Aston Community Education Trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions and three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school has specialist provision for students with a diagnosis of autism.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive principal, associate principal, other leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art and design technology, history, science, physical education and English. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in other subjects. They visited the school's provision for SEND pupils, reading intervention sessions and tutor time. They observed pupils at various times of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke to representatives of a sample of the alternative provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders responsible for the sixth-form provision and spoke to pupils in the sixth form.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with members of the local governing body, trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions during the inspection and through the Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Carr, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Voyce	His Majesty's Inspector
Vicky Callaghan	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Cresswell	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Ferstenberg	Ofsted Inspector

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