

Inspection of Swavesey Village College

Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB24 4RS

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024, and 21 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Jim Stavrou. This school is part of the Meridian Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Woods, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Shirley Jamieson. There is also an executive principal, Martin Campbell, who is responsible for this school and three others.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Swavesey Village College as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. The academy received an inspection under section 8 of the Act on 20 February 2020. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Swavesey Village College is a welcoming, inclusive school with high ambitions for all. All pupils enjoy many excellent opportunities. They praise the range of clubs, such as robotics, rock climbing and multiple musical bands. Pupils exhibit beautiful works of art. School teams compete in and often win local sporting competitions. Pupils won a national languages competition. Exciting trips extend learning, for example a mathematics trip to Paris. The house system develops deep leadership skills. Through this, older pupils help younger ones settle and thrive. Pupils build up their character in a rich way, such as developing high levels of respect.

The school is a supportive community that pupils enjoy attending. They benefit from positive working relationships with adults and learn in a safe environment. Behaviour is calm and orderly. Pupils are friendly and polite. They conduct themselves well around the school and in social times. In lessons, they focus very well on their learning. Pupils are kind to each other.

Pupils learn a very well-designed curriculum. They appreciate their teachers. Many pupils achieve very high outcomes. Pupils learn what they need to be successful in their next steps. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), progress on to positive destinations.

Parents and carers greatly appreciate all that the school provides for their children.

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

Leaders have created a vibrant, successful school, where all are welcome and all can succeed.

The curriculum is broad and well planned. For example, Year 9 pupils learn key content in depth as they move towards GCSEs. There is a wide and interesting range of GCSE and equivalent courses from which pupils can choose. High proportions of pupils choose ambitious courses, such as languages. Subject leaders identify what pupils should learn and when. Comprehensive planning ensures that learning is regularly revisited. Pupils build up detailed knowledge throughout their time at the school.

Staff teach the curriculum well. They have strong subject knowledge. The trust helps the school provide effective training. Teachers use well-crafted activities so pupils understand and remember the most important content. When pupils have misconceptions, teachers check and rectify these. As a result, pupils develop confidence and produce high-quality work.

The school has worked systematically to adapt their provision for pupils with SEND as the needs of their cohort have changed over time. Staff receive pertinent information about each pupil, which they use to help them to make whatever adaptations are needed in lessons. There is a regular programme of training for staff

to help them to meet the needs of pupils with SEND well, and this is added to and adapted depending on what leaders learn about staff's work and pupils' needs. Careful attention is paid to moving from Year 6 to Year 7 so that pupils with SEND settle quickly. A few parents and carers have not, in the past, always felt that their children with SEND have been well supported. Leaders have extended and enhanced their communication with parents so that parents are well informed and consulted.

The school has a range of well-established programmes to boost pupils' reading skills, including buddy reading, reading tutoring and early morning reading for pupils with SEND. In response to having more pupils who need intense support with reading, the school has introduced a phonics programme for some. Staff receive frequent training on how to develop pupils' reading. All pupils benefit from the continual emphasis on reading in lessons.

Leaders have established clear expectations and processes for behaviour. Staff apply the behaviour policy well. For example, rewards are used effectively to motivate pupils. Pupils respond very well and sanctions are rarely needed.

The school has strong and effective systems to understand attendance patterns and trends. They use this information very well to take swift action to stem any decline, as well as to find out what the barriers are for those whose attendance is low. For pupils who find it difficult to attend, the school uses a range of thoughtful and responsive strategies to help them. The school is tenacious about attendance: when something does not work, they try something else. For a few pupils, it takes a long time before their attendance improves significantly, but the school does not give up.

The curriculum for personal development is exemplary. The school's values and 'PLEDGES' system consistently underpin this. Pupils learn important content in way that they find interesting and relevant. For example, they discuss with considerable maturity their understanding of healthy relationships. Female pupils learn about signs of breast cancer. The curriculum teaches them how to stay safe. Pupils know a lot about staying safe online. Pupils get high-quality guidance about their next steps. This wide and coherent programme prepares them excellently for life in a changing world.

The trust monitors and supports the provision closely. Trustees and governors check carefully on the well-being of leaders and staff. The trust keeps effective oversight of safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136580
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10267918
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,245
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shirley Jamieson
Principal	Jim Stavrou
Website	www.swaveseyvc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 February 2020

Information about this school

- Swavesey Village college is part of the Meridian Trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

The inspection started on 30 January 2024. Inspectors returned on 21 May 2024 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, executive principal, other senior leaders, staff, and pupils. As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector met with seven members of the Academy Council, including the chair, and two trustees, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, ethics, design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also evaluated the curriculum in some other subjects.
- As part of evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders, governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors discussed SEND, attendance, reading and the provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils with leaders, including trust leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans, school development plans, policies and documentation relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 238 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 158 free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection. They considered the 99 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, and the 290 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Robins	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Morris-King, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Madeleine Gerard	His Majesty's Inspector

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