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Mr Chris Greenhough, Mr Alan Kealy and Mrs Danielle England  
Headteachers  
Swanwick School and Sports College  
Hayes Lane  
Swanwick  
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Derbyshire  
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Dear Mr Greenhough, Mr Kealy and Mrs England

### **Short inspection of Swanwick School and Sports College**

Following my visit to the school on 5 March 2019 with Janis Warren, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in March 2015.

#### **This school continues to be outstanding.**

You, together with other leaders and governors, have ensured that the strengths of the school have been sustained and built upon. The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

At the time of the inspection, Mrs Danielle England, the co-headteacher, was on maternity leave and so Mr Alan Kealy was acting co-headteacher.

Swanwick School and Sports College is a calm and friendly learning environment. My colleague and I were made to feel very welcome by all pupils and staff. Pupils are respectful, confident and very polite. They are very proud of their school and their work. This was evident in their behaviour in lessons and at social times, and in their attitudes to their work.

Outstanding teaching provides pupils with the necessary skills to make exceptional progress, not only in academic areas, but also in their personal and social development and life skills. Teachers build on previous learning and ensure that lessons stimulate pupils' understanding and enjoyment. Routines are firmly established in each classroom, enabling pupils to settle quickly into lessons.

A strong emphasis has been placed on providing feedback and next steps in learning to pupils. The approach agreed is consistently used by all staff across the school and understood by pupils, who were keen to share their work with inspectors and to discuss their achievements and aspirations.

You have developed leadership at all levels within the school. You have encouraged and supported senior and middle leaders to develop their skills and have given them greater responsibility. This has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. These leaders now take the lead in monitoring and holding staff to account.

You have recognised the impact of the work of the Matrix Teaching School Alliance, which Swanwick School and Sports College leads, and you support the role of the teaching school director. Inspectors spoke with headteachers of schools within the alliance, who spoke very highly of the quality of professional development, initial teacher training and school-to-school support which the teaching school provides.

You also quite rightly recognise that by releasing staff to provide training and support in other schools, this in turn serves to enable them to reflect on and improve their own practice. Together with other leaders you recognise that this has contributed to sustained improvement within your own school.

Governors have ensured that the school continues to develop. They make regular visits to school to find out for themselves about the work of the school. They ask key questions and challenge leaders appropriately to ensure that the provision is safe and that decisions taken are in the pupils' best interests. They feel passionate about pupils' education and well-being and are wholly supportive of leaders.

Pupils say learning is fun. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and supportive. Staff maintain good classroom order. Any minor behavioural disruptions are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Behaviour around the school is excellent. During our observations and discussions with pupils they demonstrated an overwhelming sense of pride in their school. They were eager to chat about their work, school activities and their future aspirations.

Parents and carers are very supportive of school leaders and staff. All parents who shared their views with inspectors were very grateful for the provision and the progress their children are making. Parents feel that their children are safe and happy and they are assured that the support received goes 'above and beyond expectations'. A typical parental view, echoed by others, was that 'Choosing this school for my child is one of the best decisions we ever made.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is at the heart of the school's work. A strong safeguarding culture is evident and protecting pupils and keeping them safe is a key priority for everyone.

Clear protocols are in place for the start and end of school days. Staff 'meet and greet' and ensure that pupils feel welcome, safe and calm at the beginning of each day.

Pupils are encouraged to move around the school independently. For example, at

the end of breaktime most pupils make their own way safely and without adult support to the next lesson, ready to engage in their next activities.

Safeguarding training is regularly provided for all staff and governors. All staff are aware of what to do and how to report matters if they have a concern about a pupil. There are clear protocols in place to ensure that issues are resolved quickly when that is possible. Throughout the school pupils are taught about the potential risks and dangers they might face as they grow up, including those relating to bullying and staying safe online.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Governors and leaders are meticulous and rigorous in their approach to the recruitment of staff. Their procedures are thorough, and they are appropriately trained.

Logs of incidents of poor behaviour are detailed and analysis of pupils' behaviour shows a reduction in fixed-term exclusions. The work of the pastoral team and the positive support work developed by the school are instrumental in ensuring that pupils and their families are well supported and receive the help they need at the appropriate time. This includes support from outside agencies when needed.

### **Inspection findings**

- A wide range of courses, which provide a good balance of academic and vocational options, are available to pupils in key stage 4. These include GCSE/functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and computing, BTEC National Diploma qualifications and a range of other awards.
- Parents told inspectors that staff 'go the extra mile' to support them and their children to prepare them for their next steps. Pupils take part in work experience and taster courses. School staff hold discussions with pupils and parents to help them make informed choices. Pupils are supported to make their applications, visit colleges and attend interviews. The vast majority of pupils who leave Swanwick School and Sports College move on to a college or sixth-form place.
- Leaders promote high expectations and aspirations for all pupils across the school. As a result, staff encourage pupils to work to their strengths and try even more in the areas they find hard. There is a great sense of purpose and achievement throughout the school.
- A great deal of thought has gone into the planning and design of the school curriculum to enable pupils to learn step by step, as well as to provide interest and fun in learning. The life-skills curriculum encourages pupils to become independent learners and to become confident members of the school and wider community.
- All staff spoken with felt very well supported by leaders and were very happy in their roles. They all felt they were given opportunities for developing their skills and knowledge and were keen to discuss the impact of training they had received to support their work with pupils.

- While lessons jointly observed by inspectors and leaders were on the whole very well resourced, taking into account the needs and abilities of pupils, support for communication was not always consistently used across the school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's approach to supporting pupils with communication difficulties is strengthened, to ensure consistency across the year groups.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lynda Morgan  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

My colleague and I met with you to discuss progress since the last inspection, the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. We discussed the key lines of enquiry and agreed an inspection plan for the day.

We spoke with several members of staff about the curriculum, assessment, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils' welfare and attendance. I met with members of the school's pastoral team, including the special educational needs coordinator.

I met with members of the governing body, including the chair and the staff representative. I spoke on the telephone with the school improvement adviser from the local authority.

We observed learning across the whole school and in parts of lessons with you and a senior leader. We also looked at examples of pupils' work from all key stages. We spoke with pupils and observed their behaviour at break and lunchtime.

We reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school, including the self-evaluation, school improvement plan, local authority visit notes, minutes from governing body meetings and records of governors' visits to the school. We also reviewed records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and exclusions. We considered the five responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We also considered the school's evaluations of their own most recent questionnaires for staff, pupils and parents.