

# Sawston Village College

New Road, Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3BP

## Inspection dates

6–7 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- GCSE examination results are well above the national averages.
- Students make good progress and achieve well, particularly in mathematics, science and humanities. Standards of work are rising in English and are good.
- Students are articulate, read fluently and write well.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan their lessons carefully and use questioning well to extend students' understanding.
- Students' behaviour is excellent, as seen in the high levels of concentration in lessons and the exemplary attitudes shown in the classrooms, where they work extremely well together. They are polite, friendly, and respectful to staff and each other.
- Students feel safe at the college. Vulnerable students and those with social and emotional needs receive good support.
- The college is led and managed well. The Principal and his leadership team know what it needs to do to become better and are taking decisive action. This demonstrates the college's strong capacity to improve.
- Governors are well informed about the work of the college and hold leaders to account for its performance.
- The college promotes students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development very well and provides a wide range of lunchtime and after-college activities in sport, the arts and music.
- The college prepares students well, both academically and personally, for future success.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Results are not yet consistently high across all GCSE subjects.
- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. In some lessons, work is not pitched at the right level of difficulty for everyone in the class and this slows down progress.
- Sometimes teachers do not set enough time aside in lessons to question students, and this means they do not have enough opportunities to think and talk about what they have learned.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons, of which 13 were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievements in lessons. They also observed behaviour during break times, visited tutor periods and attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, teachers and six representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked to many students about their learning and life at the college. They held formal meetings with four groups of students and reviewed their work in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 questionnaires completed by staff and the 204 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team observed the college's work and reviewed current data about students' achievement; examined records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance; and looked at documents used by leaders in monitoring and reviewing the college's work, including self-evaluation and development plans.

## Inspection team

Frances Le Pla, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Heather Housden

Additional Inspector

Concetta Caruana

Additional Inspector

Terence Cook

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Sawston Village College converted to become an academy on 1 June 2011. When the predecessor college, known by the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The college is similar in size to the average-sized secondary school. It serves the local community of Sawston and the surrounding villages.
- The proportion of boys attending the college is higher than average.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding to support particular groups of students such as those known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Seven students spend time at Cambridge Regional College as part of the work-related courses they are studying. A very few students attend the Phoenix Trust part-time, and a very few attend a tuition college in Cambridge full-time.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The college is a member of the local teaching school alliance, the Cambridge and Suffolk School Alliance, and also the Henry Morris Community Trust which works with local primary schools, the Diocese of Ely, the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and a local charity to raise aspirations and achievement.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching good or outstanding, so GCSE grades are significantly well above average in all subjects, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - set work in every lesson that fully matches the abilities and needs of all in the class
  - allow enough time in lessons for questioning so students can think and talk about what they have learned.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well. They join the college in Year 7 with standards that are typically above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2012, the proportion of students who attained five or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics was well above average. Standards rose again in 2013.
- In 2012 and 2013, results in mathematics were very high and well above the 2012 national average (the latest year for which comparative data are available) with over a third of students gaining the highest A\* and A grades. In English, they were broadly average in 2012 but improved considerably in 2013.
- Standards in science are well above average and over half of the students gain good GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics. Results in history, music, religious studies and drama have been well above average for the last two years with high proportions of students achieving A\* and A grades. In contrast, results in GCSE German and Spanish are average.
- Taking into account their previous test results, nearly all students make at least the progress expected of them by the end of Key Stage 4. The proportion who exceed expected progress in both English and mathematics has grown, and in 2013 was above the 2012 national figures. Boys and girls progress equally well. Students achieve very well in science and the humanities.
- The college allows some Year 11 students to take their mathematics examinations early. This policy is used wisely and for the students' benefit. The very good achievement of students in mathematics seen over the last two years shows the effectiveness of the college's strategy.
- Pupil premium funding is being used appropriately to raise achievement of disadvantaged students and they are benefiting from the additional help they are being given. In 2012, their attainment in Year 11 examinations was two grades behind other students in the college in English and one and a half grades behind in mathematics. The Year 11 students achieved better in 2013, and this shows that they are now catching up with their classmates.
- The college uses its Year 7 'catch up' funding to provide intensive small-group teaching for some younger students. As a result, these students are making rapid progress in improving their reading, spelling and writing skills.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to their classmates. This is because the college carefully tracks their achievement and ensures they have additional support when they need it.
- The progress of students who attend education in other locations to study work-related courses is monitored closely. They make good progress on their courses and gain valuable experiences and qualifications relevant to work. In 2012, only two students left the college without a place in employment, education or training.
- Literacy, communication and mathematical skills are strong among students of all ages. Students read and write well. They are very articulate and express themselves clearly and confidently. Younger students enjoy the regular opportunities they have to read and discuss the books they enjoy during tutor time.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Good teaching across Years 7 to 11, with some that is outstanding, means that students learn at a good pace.
- Where teaching is good or better, lessons are carefully planned and build on previous work. In these lessons, students are provided with well-structured tasks to help them develop their skills and understanding so they make good progress. In a very well taught Year 9 physical education lesson, the wide range of carefully timed challenging activities led to the boys making rapid progress in their football skills.
- Students enjoy the many opportunities their teachers give them to work with others in groups and pairs to debate and refine their ideas. In a Year 10 history lesson, the students worked very well in pairs to identify the factors that contributed to the end of the First World War in 1918. As they enthusiastically shared their ideas with others, they made good progress in understanding that a combination of many factors brought about the end of the war.
- Teachers use their good knowledge of their subjects to ask questions that encourage and help students to think more deeply about their work and come up with their own ideas and answers to the problems set. This enables them to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to new learning situations.
- Teachers communicate high expectations for what students should achieve and set a positive atmosphere for learning in lessons. As a result students are interested, engaged and eager to learn.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly and give them useful feedback on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Students enjoy the many opportunities that teachers provide for them to evaluate each other's work, and this helps them understand the next steps they need to take in their own learning.
- Literacy skills are taught well and there are often interesting displays of key words and reminders about spelling and punctuation patterns in classrooms. Many teachers give students helpful guidance on improving their writing skills so they can tackle examination questions that require longer answers more successfully.
- A small amount of teaching requires improvement. This is because planning does not take full account of the particular needs of individuals within a class. As a result, work is occasionally too hard or too easy for some students, and they sometimes have too few opportunities to work on their own or as part of a group. Sometimes teachers do not allow enough time in the lesson to ask probing questions. This means that they are not making sure how successful learning has been, and students do not have enough opportunity to deepen their understanding by thinking about or talking about what they have learned.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Students' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Students of all ages are highly motivated and hungry to learn. In lessons, they are attentive, self-disciplined and sustain high levels of concentration whether working on their own or in groups. As a result, they work extremely well with their teachers and each other and make good progress in their learning.
- Behaviour around the college and during break times is impeccable. Students are mature, polite

and courteous in their dealings with adults and other students. Relationships across the college are excellent.

- Students say they feel safe in the college and bullying of any form is uncommon. Reported incidents are dealt with immediately and firmly. Students are well informed about how to stay safe and understand the harm that homophobic or racist name-calling can cause. Students also know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- The great majority of parents and carers agree that the college is a very happy and safe place where students behave extremely well.
- Adults provide students with very good quality care. Vulnerable students and those who have social and emotional needs receive good support from staff, and this helps them to stay involved in college life.
- Students thoroughly enjoy the opportunities they have to take responsibility. Year 7 students appreciate the help they have from the Year 10 mentors attached to their tutor group. Older students lead the college senate and run college forum groups on topics such as increasing 'eco awareness' which students of all ages attend.
- Attendance rates are above average and continuing to rise because students enjoy their learning and value what the college offers them.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The Principal, supported by the governors and the senior leadership team, has a clear ambition and vision for the development of the college. They are totally committed to ensuring that all students benefit from the best education possible. As a result, teaching and students' achievement are at least good in most subjects.
- A well-focused development plan, based on accurate evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, clearly identifies the right priorities the college needs to work on to continue to improve. Leaders have quite rightly recognised the need to continue to provide high-quality training and coaching for all staff to ensure that more teaching is outstanding.
- Leaders and managers, including governors and teachers in charge of subjects, have high expectations and are contributing well to the improvement of the college. The impact of this is evident in the rising standards in English and the high levels of achievement in mathematics and science, but has yet to be seen fully in some other subjects such as GCSE German and Spanish, where results are not as high as the rest of the college.
- The college has a strong system for frequently checking its own performance at all levels. Those in charge of subjects, other leaders and teachers are held to account by senior staff, who in turn are held to account by the Principal and the governing body. Leaders make regular checks on teaching through lesson observations, shorter visits to lessons and reviews of students' work.
- The college tracks students' progress well, and acts quickly to support any individual students who are not progressing as well as they should be. The progress made by different groups is also examined and compared. As a result of this work, and a sharp analysis of the 2012 results, the college recognised that it needed to do more to improve the progress of disadvantaged students, who were not doing as well as they should, and took effective action to resolve this.

- The management of teachers' performance is well organised and rigorous. Decisions about teachers' pay rises and promotion are clearly linked to evidence of high quality teaching and the good progress of all students in their care.
- The range of subjects and courses taught by the college prepares students well for employment or further education and training. Students are given high quality independent advice and guidance when choosing their GCSE courses or deciding what to do when they leave at the end of Year 11. Learning is further enhanced by an extensive range of lunchtime and after-college activities in sport, the arts and music.
- Leaders make a positive contribution to improving education in the local area through their work with primary schools within the Henry Morris Community Trust and also membership of the teaching school alliance, where Sawston leads on research and development and training for teachers who lead their subject areas.
- The college promotes students' spiritual moral, social and cultural development very well. The ASPIRE principles provide a firm foundation for students' self-motivation. In lessons there are many opportunities for students to consider a wide range of issues and ideas about the world around them. Well-established links with Russia and Rwanda help students appreciate life in different countries.
- **The governance of the college:**
  - Governors show a great commitment to the college and bring a wide range of personal skills and professional expertise to their role. They have a clear strategic vision for the college. They hold the Principal and senior leaders to account for all aspects of performance. Governors fully support the Principal in managing teachers' performance so that only the best teaching is rewarded. Subject leaders are required to attend committee meetings during the year to report on performance in their subjects and this helps ensure that governors are very well informed about the quality of teaching and students' achievement across the college. They know how well students achieve compared to all colleges nationally. Governors visit the college regularly and are fully involved in deciding priorities for improvement. They take account of parental views through reviewing responses to surveys and attending parents' evenings. Governors play a key role in deciding spending priorities and understand, for example, the importance of carefully spending pupil premium funds to close the achievement gap for eligible students. Governors regularly review their skills and undertake training when they need to. For example, they are soon to have a training session to update their understanding of the role of governors in an academy. The governors make sure that the college meets current national requirements for safeguarding and child protection.

## What inspection judgements mean

College		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136775
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425397

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1048
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Lamkin
<b>Principal</b>	Jonathan Culpin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
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