

# Inspection of a good school: Sawston Village College

New Road, Sawston, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB22 3BP

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Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2023

## Outcome

Sawston Village College continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Sawston is a welcoming, friendly and caring school. Leaders and teachers share high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They seek to 'unlock potential' in all learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's 'CARE' values of community, ambition, respect and endeavour are apparent in all aspects of school life.

Pupils are happy at this school and say that they feel safe. They behave well. They are polite and courteous to visitors. They move around the school calmly. Incidents of bullying are rare, and pupils say that when it does happen, teachers deal with it swiftly and decisively. Some pupils are anti-bullying ambassadors, and are well trained to support other pupils.

A strong ethos of pupil leadership abounds. For example, Year 8 'housemates' help Year 7 pupils settle in. The pupil senate and its associated forums, led by Year 11 pupils, has an active voice in influencing school priorities.

The school is rightly proud of its enduring tradition of strong music and performing arts provision. Many pupils also take full advantage of the wide variety of other enrichment activities and visits available. These include sports and languages clubs, a book club, BAME club, STEM club and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. High-quality and ambitious curriculum plans set out the sequence in which pupils will learn this knowledge. In some subjects, leaders realise that new knowledge could be introduced more precisely. Teachers are making effective adjustments to plans in response to this.

Teachers have the expertise required to teach their subjects. They teach the planned curriculum carefully, and emphasise the key knowledge regularly so that pupils can

remember it. As a result, pupils make strong progress and are well prepared for GCSEs and post-16 courses.

Teachers regularly check what pupils have learned. This enables teachers to adjust their teaching to fill any gaps in knowledge for pupils or groups of pupils. Their use of feedback is particularly effective.

Reading is an important part of school life. It is encouraged across the curriculum and as reading for pleasure. The weakest readers receive skilled and effective support which is helping them to become more confident and fluent readers.

Pupils with SEND learn the same ambitious curriculum as everyone else. Leaders provide teachers with high-quality training and up-to-date information on the additional learning needs of individual pupils. In turn, teachers use this information skilfully to make the adjustments that pupils with SEND need to do well.

The wider curriculum focuses well on developing pupils' character. Pupils are taught to be tolerant and respectful of others. Leaders support this with a range of external speakers and visits, for example to local places of worship. Pupils respond to this in a sensitive and mature way. Regular personal, social and health education (PSHE) enables pupils to learn about topics such as health and well-being, relationships and sex education. Pupils value the detailed careers information, advice and guidance they receive.

Some vulnerable pupils, including some pupils with SEND, do not attend as regularly as other pupils. Leaders are taking determined action to address this. They recognise that there is still more to be done.

Staff are proud and happy to work at this school. They appreciate how leaders think carefully about their workload and well-being. For example, staff meetings are suspended during examination periods and teachers are given additional time to assess pupils' work in their subject areas. Staff feel well supported by leaders and say they are treated fairly and with respect.

School and trust leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The trust has delegated some responsibilities for oversight of the school to members of the local governing body. This group knows the school well and uses its considerable combined expertise well to hold leaders to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is well led. Leaders have developed highly effective systems to keep pupils safe and well. They respond rapidly to individual safeguarding concerns, using a wide variety of external agencies when necessary. Staff training is comprehensive. As well as routine sessions during training days, there are regular, short safeguarding reminders for staff.

Pupils say they feel safe. They are taught how to be safe online and offline. They receive important information on how to look after themselves through PSHE lessons, regular assemblies and mentor-time sessions. They say they have an adult they can talk to.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- A few pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, do not attend school regularly enough. They miss too much learning and do not benefit fully from the school's strong wider curriculum. Leaders should ensure that their approaches to promoting good attendance result in these pupils attending school regularly.
- Sometimes, teachers' explanations are not clear. As a result, some pupils do not fully understand what they have been taught. Leaders should continue to make the minor readjustments needed to their curriculum plans so all pupils fully understand teachers' explanations.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136775
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268586
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,128
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Claire Lawton
<b>Principal</b>	Jonathan Russell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sawstonvc.org">www.sawstonvc.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Anglian Learning trust.
- 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 technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Leaders currently use one registered off-site alternative education provider.

## 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.
- The lead inspector met with the principal, members of the local governing body and representatives from Anglian Learning trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and history. 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.

- The lead inspector reviewed the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed safeguarding records. Inspectors spoke to governors, staff and pupils about safeguarding procedures.
- The lead inspector reviewed 271 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 186 free-text responses. He reviewed one letter from a parent.
- He also reviewed 80 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 218 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Peter Whear, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Robins	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Dawes	Ofsted Inspector

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