

Inspection of Silverwood School

Rowde, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2QQ

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

The six values of 'cooperation, courage, honesty, perseverance, respect and kindness' underpin the culture of the school and how pupils and staff go about each and every day. Pupils know the values well. They demonstrate them in their attitudes to learning, interactions with each other and relationships with staff. Pupils value the strong and nurturing relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The three school campuses and satellite classrooms are calm and purposeful places for pupils to learn.

A strong focus on pupils' wider development means that they are confident and self-aware. Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Staff have high aspirations for the future of each pupil. They nurture and use their knowledge of pupils to help them overcome significant barriers to learning. This enables pupils to achieve ambitious outcomes at each stage of their education.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to enrich and extend their learning. For example, through their learning outside the classroom, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and cultural trips. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education and to become active participants in their local community.

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

Leaders have worked to overcome the significant turbulence from the amalgamation of the three predecessor schools during the Covid-19 restrictions. During this time, leaders prioritised the education of pupils through their actions to embed a well-sequenced curriculum across the three curriculum pathways. Leaders know what is needed to continue to establish and embed the single identity of the school as it moves into its next phase.

Leaders have worked collaboratively across the campuses to design an ambitious curriculum. They support teachers to adapt the curriculum effectively to meet the wide range of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most staff feel confident in their knowledge to ensure that pupils learn the curriculum successfully. However, this is not always consistent across the school campuses. At times, pupils do not learn in line with leaders' high expectations. These expectations are not always fully understood and implemented by staff. Where they are embedded well, pupils learn and remember more over time.

Leaders are clear that a total communication approach is critical for all pupils. Staff use of a range of communication methods with pupils so they can communicate with others. These are used well in learning and planned situations. Staff are determined to give pupils a voice. However, the secure practice in communication does not always happen in unstructured and unplanned situations. At these times, some staff resort to verbal or physical based communication. At times, this conflicts with the pupil's preferred approach. The impact of this is an over reliance on adults when pupils are potentially experiencing a heightened, less familiar emotional state.

Reading is a priority. Leaders have strengthened how well pupils learn to read, including those at the earliest stages. There is a shared vision that all pupils will learn to read at a pace and level that is appropriate and ambitious for them. Teachers are supported by clear expectations of what this looks like for pupils, of all ages, who are not yet at a formal phonics stage. This is still in its early stages and not consistently embedded. Leaders promote reading for pleasure. Pupils act as literacy leaders. They take some ownership of promoting reading. Pupils read regularly. They do not always enjoy having a set time to read but they do enjoy a range of different authors and text types. Pupils have access to texts that support their learning in the wider curriculum. They address issues such as diversity and mental health.

Students in sixth form are enthusiastic about their education experiences. They describe successful college and work experience opportunities. Leaders want to extend this further. They have designed the curriculum to ensure that post-16 students have the necessary qualifications and skills for their next stage. There are close partnerships with local colleges to make this as successful as possible.

In early years, staff promote independence through familiar and predictable routines. This is where children's learning is extended and challenged. This start to their education means that as they move to the next stage, no matter what pathway they are on, pupils have opportunities to impact on school life and hold roles of responsibilities. These include an active school council and eco group.

The expectations for behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are firmly based in the values of Silverwood. Pupils and parents have their views included, where pupils may require additional support and guidance to manage their emotions and regulation.

Governors know the difficulties the school continues to face. They provide a balance of support and challenge to make sure leaders are clear about the vision and school ethos, ultimately impacting on the education of the pupils. The views of parents and carers are variable and reflect the turbulence that the school has experienced and is continuing to evolve from. Many parents do, however, value the staff and the difference they make to the lives of their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the importance of their role in keeping pupils safe. They know their responsibilities to be vigilant to anything that might indicate concern for a pupil's welfare or safety. Leaders keep staff knowledge of safeguarding up-to-date. Leaders have high expectations to ensure that safeguarding is a school priority. At times, although it meets statutory requirements, practice does not meet with these high expectations. For example, there was missing information in records despite the actions being completed.

Pupils feel safe. They can recall how they learn to be alert to risks and how they can keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that there is effective scrutiny of the single central record to ensure that checks on staff are recorded accurately. As a result, there were some administrative errors in the records of checks on staff. Leaders need to ensure that there is an effective and rigorous system in place to maintain accurate safer recruitment records and make sure that practice aligns with policy.
- Staff are not using a total communication approach consistently across the school. At times, communication strategies are used well in lessons and planned interactions were not continued into unstructured time and unplanned incidents. Staff resort to an overuse of verbal and physical prompts. This results in pupils being reliant on adults and not being as independent as they could be. Leaders need to make sure that staff are confident and skilled in using a total communication approach for all pupils in all aspects of their education.
- There is not a wholly consistent approach from staff to meet the high expectations that leaders have for pupils at the school. At times, this means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that expectations are communicated effectively so they are fully understood by staff across the school campuses. This will mean that the strong practice seen in some areas is replicated across the school.

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	148145
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10268415
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Aileen Bates
Headteacher	Sean McKeown
Website	www.silverwood.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Silverwood School opened in September 2020, merging three predecessor schools. The school has retained the previous school sites. It is now known as Silverwood School and is split across the three campuses of Chippenham, Rowde and Trowbridge.
- There is currently a new build being constructed on the Rowde campus.
- The Chippenham campus also covers the sixth form satellite provision.
- The Trowbridge campus has two early years satellite classes.
- The school has pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe and complex learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

- 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.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 headteacher, director of learning, heads of learning, middle leaders, staff and members of the governing body, including the chair. In addition, an inspector talked to the two school improvement advisors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, mathematics, personal, social and health education and the physical development curriculum. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- School staff were present for some conversations with pupils to support communication.
- Inspectors visited all school campuses.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement, and paperwork relating to the work of the governors. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, special educational needs and/or disabilities, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also took into account face-to-face parent and carer conversations and a letter that was passed to the team. Inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the pupil survey which was adapted to make it accessible for pupils.

Inspection team

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