



Swanmead Community School

Ditton Street
Ilminster
Somerset
TA19 0BL

Telephone: 01460 52431

Facsimile : 01460 55305

e-mail: office@swanmead.somerset.sch.uk

Web Address: www.swanmeadschool.org.uk

Acting Headteacher: Mrs. S. Bowker

An introduction to Swanmead Community School

Swanmead Community School is a highly successful Local Authority School sited in the centre of Ilminster, a picturesque old market town with a population of some 4,000. It is a rural environment, serving a commuter population working mainly in Taunton, Yeovil and Crewkerne, all within a radius of 15 miles. The coastal towns of Lyme Regis and Charmouth are only slightly further away. With easy access to the M5, Exeter and Bristol are within an hours drive.

Swanmead is a Middle School (deemed secondary) with pupils aged between 9 and 13. Our pupils come from Ilminster itself and from the surrounding villages of Ilton, Barrington, Hinton St. George and Shepton Beauchamp. The majority of children move to Wadham Community School in Crewkerne at the age of 13. Close links are maintained with all our partner schools.

Our school currently has a population of 311 which is predicted to rise over the next three years. The intake is genuinely comprehensive with the full social and ability range. The pupils are friendly, amenable and co-operative, although there are a number of very deprived and needy families within the school catchment area. The vast majority of children are well motivated and want to succeed. They deserve every support and encouragement.

School Management.

Management is seen as the responsibility of everyone. Within a small school, everyone has the right, and is encouraged, to be involved in decision-making. This includes parents and pupils. All staff are responsible for contributing to the smooth and effective management of the school, often managing their own subject priorities. Curriculum Development Managers and whole school co-ordinators of Literacy, Numeracy, ICTAC, SEN, Gifted and Talented, Going Global and PSHCE/Citizenship support the work of all teachers. Throughout the year individual staff may also be asked to contribute to working parties and discussion groups as new developments emerge.

Tutors are responsible for overseeing the progress and well being of each child in their tutor group (Yr 6-8 vertical groups). The Curriculum Inclusion Manager, and a newly formed Pupil Support Team, will support the team of form tutors. Curriculum teams are responsible for the delivery of the core subjects and the components of the academic curriculum. All subject co-ordinators have responsibility for the development of Literacy, Numeracy and ICT. The school provides many opportunities for teachers to develop management and leadership expertise. The non-contact entitlement is identified,



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agreed and allocated for project co-ordination within the annual school management planning process.

The School is fully committed to implementing the Workforce Agreement and is very aware of the importance of considering staff work-life balance and well-being. All teachers are entitled to 3 hours management & preparation time. Additional time is allocated to key managers.

An induction programme supports all new members of staff. The school has a successful record of supporting NQT's and initial teacher training.

The Administrative Support Team is responsible for supporting the teaching staff. The school has a state-of-the-art whole school IT network which integrates the existing administrative system, based upon SIMS modules, with the curriculum IT network. The school also has extensive reprographic facilities and technician support. All members of staff are competent users of IT as school reports and documents are based upon this system. Every teacher is allocated a school lap-top.

Site and Buildings.

The School is constantly undergoing upgrade and refurbishment in order to ensure employees and learners have a pleasant working environment. There is an Assembly Hall, a gymnasium, two fully equipped Science Laboratories, a 26 bay ICT suite with satellite systems in many classrooms, a recently opened Design Technology area, a Library and 12 specialist classrooms. Every classroom is carpeted, fully furnished with modern furniture; has an interactive whiteboard and fixed multi-media projector. Additional IT facilities are available. Extensive playing fields supplemented by an all weather multi-use games area (MUGA) overlook the South Somerset countryside to the rear of the main building. The Assembly Hall is used for daily meals from the school kitchen. The kitchen also supplies hot and cold meals to schools throughout the area.

The development of playground facilities is on-going and is supported by pupil fund-raising and designs.

What do we teach and how is it organised?

Curriculum is interpreted as the sum of a pupil's experience at school and therefore includes academic, pastoral and extra-curricular dimensions. The curriculum at Swanmead Community School is based upon the following principles:

1. All pupils are entitled to experience every subject component at a level appropriate to their ability.
2. The curriculum offers pupils access to a broad range of knowledge, concepts, skills, values and attitudes.
3. Teaching and learning styles provide a balance between practical and factual activities.
4. Teaching and learning is planned to ensure pupils have opportunities to develop self-confidence and to be increasingly independent in their thinking and learning.
5. Teaching and learning is planned to ensure pupils have opportunities to work in co-operation with other groups in a variety of contexts.
6. Pupils have the opportunity to reflect upon their learning and set targets which will enhance their standard of achievement.
7. Learning should be relevant and enable interaction with the local and wider community.
8. The transfer of pupils between First, Middle and Upper School is based upon a programme that is progressive and ensures seamless continuity.
9. The development of pupils who are able to cope with the continuing challenges of formal education in preparation for adult life.

The curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum and is modified to enable broader curriculum principles to be achieved. The curriculum covered includes English, Mathematics, Science, ICT, Design + Technology, French, Geography, History, Art, Music and Physical Education. Religious Education is taught according to the Somerset Agreed Syllabus. Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and the social and emotional aspects of learning are important cross-curricular dimensions that all staff are expected to deliver.

Information Communication Technology is taught discretely in years 5, 6 and 7 and within all curriculum areas in all year groups. In January 2007, an OfSTED ICT subject inspection judged the school as good with many outstanding features.

Dance is integrated within the PE programme. Drama is taught within subject areas and is a key extra-curricular activity that culminates in an annual whole school performance.

Pattern of the school day.

Teachers are required to be on site by 8.45 a.m.. A 5-minute registration (8.55 a.m.) is followed by a morning session (9.00 – 13.05) consisting of four lessons divided by a break (10.55 – 11.10). The afternoon session consists of a registration and an assembly / tutor period (14.05 – 14.30) followed by a one hour lesson (14.30 – 15.30) Owing to the number of children who are bussed into school, extra-curricular clubs tend to be concentrated within lunchtime. Any member of staff who organises a lunchtime or after-school activity is entitled to a free school lunch. Most members of staff organise at least one club a week.

Schemes of Work

All subjects' schemes of work are planned with a strong emphasis upon cross-curricular themes (Careers, Citizenship, Environmental Education, Health and Personal & Social Education). These elements are integrated within the curriculum, tutorial time and extra-curricular provision. Going Global is a key focus, and the School has an active link with St Luke's Secondary School, Msoro, Zambia including teacher exchanges. The school achieved International School Award status in July 2007 and this was revalidated in 2010.

Extra curricular provision and educational visits and excursions

Visits and excursions are a regular feature of the school year to which all staff are asked to demonstrate an active commitment. Residential opportunities include Barton Hall, Devon (Year 5), London (Year 6) and Great Wood, Somerset (Year 7). The English and Science teams also organise a wide range of day activities and visits that enrich the curriculum experience. The school is currently looking to further develop this aspect as such activities are seen as important opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and enhance the moral and cultural dimensions of their education.

The school also has an annual programme of performances that celebrate pupil achievement.

Upon admission to the school each pupil is allocated to one of three Year 5 house tutor groups. Within each year group there are 3 classes of between 25-30 pupils. English and Mathematics determine the setting for teaching groups in all year groups. Subject specialists teach lessons in all year groups.



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The School Council provides a mechanism for pupils to develop ownership of their school and suggest a range of opportunities for developing cultural and social dimensions of the curriculum. Pupils take responsibility for a variety of activities including roles related to House Captains (Year 8 only), Peer Mediators and supporters, organising playtime games, running extra-curricular activities and numerous fund-raising events.

Swanmead is a thriving Community School that offers educational and recreational opportunities to the whole community throughout the year.

The school enjoys strong support from parents, both through formal and informal contacts. A vibrant School Association (SSA) supports the school through social, educational and fund-raising activities.

People who feel good perform well.

Swanmead Community School has a staff of:- Head, 14 full time and 4 part-time teachers, 11 Learning Support Assistants, an Office and Finance Manager, School Secretary, Assistant Finance Officer, Systems, Resources, ICT and Curriculum Technicians, a Caretaker and 2 part-time curriculum technicians. All teaching staff are fully qualified teachers.

The School considers staff welfare as a priority and is committed to a programme of continual professional development.

The School Governors actively engage with and support all aspects of school life.

To ensure that Swanmead becomes a school where quality and high standards are ensured, training of all personnel is a key priority. The principle "If you fail to train, you train to fail" is central to the school philosophy. Training is seen as part of the normal expectation of working at the school and is based upon the following principles:

1. Every member of staff has a clear job description, which is reviewed annually.
2. The Performance Management Policy applies to all personnel employed at the school.
3. The school has a tradition of running a very successful NQT induction programme. Swanmead is a centre for Initial Teacher Training associated with Bath Spa University.
4. All staff are entitled to training and support in school systems and procedures. A full induction programme is undertaken with all new appointees.
5. Staff are encouraged to be reflective practitioners thereby ensuring that the quality and ethos of the school are enhanced. Creativity is encouraged.

A visit to our school website www.swanmeadschool.org.uk will give you further information about the school. We would also be pleased to invite you to visit the school and meet the Headteacher before committing yourself to making an application.