

The Primrose Centre

Throne Road, Rowley Regis B65 9JP

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides enthusiastic and effective leadership, which has ensured that recent improvements have been rapid and sustained. The deputy headteacher is now also a permanent appointment, which has added greatly to the stability of the centre.
- The teachers are now permanent staff and are making a good contribution to the continual improvement of the centre. They are adding to the capacity of leadership and delivering a good curriculum.
- The management committee makes a very good contribution to the leadership of the centre. Its members have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development and hold senior leaders fully to account.
- Pupils are making good progress from their starting points at the centre. Any aspects of underperformance are tackled to ensure that they are prepared well for their future education.
- Pupils' attendance is good and has improved greatly when compared with their previous placements. Attendance on the second day of the inspection was an impressive 100%.
- Behaviour is particularly good when the pupils are with staff whom they know well. The high quality of the pupils' previous work shows that they have positive attitudes to their learning. Behaviour in the assembly, attended by all staff and pupils, was outstanding. The pupils celebrated individual achievements and enjoyed being together.
- The pupils' safety and welfare are at the heart of the centre's work. Very individual planning and attention ensures that their learning and personal needs are fully met.
- The pupils respond well to enthusiastic teaching and an appropriate level of challenge. They particularly enjoy practical and creative activities, including opportunities to work together.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are visits during the centre's day to enrich the pupils' learning. However, their learning is not extended after school or on residential trips.
- The large number of temporary teaching assistants contributes to some unsettled behaviour. Understandably, these staff take time
- The leadership of English, mathematics and science is in the early stages. The teachers do not yet fully check the standard of the pupils' work alongside their mainstream peers. Also, the management committee has not yet established a member to work with each of these key subjects.

to get to know the pupils and build trust.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve behaviour and keep exclusions at a minimum by:
 - building on the positive impact of appointing permanent senior leaders and teachers by appointing a permanent teaching assistant team
 - training a more stable team to develop more ways of preventing, rather than reacting to, challenging behaviour
 - developing a facility in the centre which can support pupils instead of the need to exclude.
- Build on the developments in the leadership of English, mathematics and science by:
 - providing more opportunities for links with mainstream schools to check and agree on the standard of the pupils' work
 - inviting the management committee to nominate a member to provide support and challenge to the leadership of each of these key subjects.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to take a full and active part in learning, in after-school clubs and on residential trips.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has worked very hard to establish permanent senior leadership and teaching teams. She is determined that the next step is to do the same for the teaching assistants. The senior leaders set high expectations and have a clear vision for the future of the centre. Staff are proud to work at the centre, have full confidence in the leadership and share their ambition for the future.
- English, mathematics and science are led by enthusiastic teachers who have planned time to further develop these key subjects. The teachers have started to develop links with mainstream schools to check that their assessment of pupils' work is accurate.
- The leadership team involves the teachers in reviewing the strengths and areas for development in the centre. The whole team is good at working together to make improvements in the pupils' best interests. This has resulted in good teaching across the centre with raised expectations and the best use of the time available. This is good progress since the previous inspection.
- The progress of individuals and groups of pupils is rigorously tracked. This information is used effectively to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to make the best of their abilities.
- Performance management is used constructively to develop teaching and builds on best practice in the centre. Conversations about teaching are open and honest and based on mutual respect. Staff training opportunities have been increased over the last year to good effect. Staff value the training opportunities, which have boosted their skills and confidence.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Displays around the school reflect the high profile given to activities that promote tolerance and mutual respect.
- The curriculum is up to date and reflects recent developments in mainstream schools. This ensures that the pupils have an equality of opportunity with their mainstream peers. Learning has been designed to enthuse pupils, offering a balance of basic skills and topic work. The curriculum has a particularly positive impact on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The learning activities are planned to develop the pupils' capacity to work together, which is initially a challenge for many of the pupils.
- The physical education and sports premium is used well to increase the number of pupils taking part in physical activities, which is good progress since the previous inspection. The funding has helped to develop their ability to cooperate and take part in team games. The healthy-eating tuck shop encourages them to take more care over their diet.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to provide individual support to help boost progress and fund educational visits. Some money is used to promote pupils' emotional well-being.
- Local primary schools value the work of the centre. They are clear that the short-term placements have a positive impact on the pupils' progress and personal development. The schools are receptive to developing the links further to ensure that all staff have a full understanding of what is expected of the pupils who return to mainstream education.
- The centre works well with parents. Regular contact is maintained and parents are kept up to date about life in the centre. An increased number of parents transport their children to school and this daily contact helps to build positive working partnerships.
- The local authority has provided a good blend of support and challenge to help move the centre forward. They have helped to facilitate the consolidation of the staffing team. This has made a significant difference but more remains to be done to ensure that there is stability in the whole staff team.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The management committee has the skills, training and commitment to help keep moving the centre forward. Members have played a significant role in the rapid improvements that have taken place during the last 12 months.
 - The records of management committee meetings and conversations with members confirm that they are fully aware of the centre's strengths and areas for development. They provide challenge based on a good working knowledge of the centre and this ensures that their contribution is effective.
 - Members of the management committee have an excellent understanding of the centre's progress information. They can track how effectively additional funding is used.
 - The management committee has allocated specific responsibilities to members in aspects such as safeguarding. However, it does not yet provide support and challenge to help drive forward progress in key subjects.

- Members are fully aware of the link between teachers' performance and their pay.
- A high priority is placed on ensuring that the statutory requirements are met for pupils' welfare.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Appropriate policies are kept up to date and staff are provided with relevant training to ensure that the pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection as there are now raised expectations for progress and behaviour. Clear planning provides challenge to all pupils and ensures that learning time is used fully. Teachers have the knowledge and skills to effectively meet the pupils' wide range of needs.
- Each pupil has their own learning journal, which provides details of their targets, the tracking of progress and details of their individual package of support and challenge. They are therefore fully aware of expectations and their progress, and this encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils follows the centre's policy and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Verbal and written feedback highlights what pupils have done well and how they can improve, and that the advice is acted on.
- Teaching ensures that pupils have the skills to tackle new words. They gain the confidence to learn from their mistakes and make good progress in their reading. Pupils showed that they could transfer these skills to learn basic Spanish words. They gain the confidence to learn from their mistakes, which is major progress for many of the pupils.
- A current focus is on pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. They are making good progress in these in their wide range of high-quality writing. A group of pupils developed a good understanding of the key features of characters in a story and then produced accurate writing about their own characteristics.
- There has been an effective drive to include mathematics in other subjects. The success of this initiative is evident in the pupils' work and classroom displays. Good progress is being made in accurate measuring, including the use of fractions, in pupils' practical science activities.
- The established teaching assistants focus effectively on learning and help to develop a positive and purposeful learning environment. They use their skills and experience to keep pupils engaged and prevent disruption. They provided a suitable level of support in a lesson where pupils enjoyed making model villages. They were very proud of their finished models and were keen to show others their work.
- Parents appreciate that they are kept well-informed about their child's learning and are advised how learning at home can help them to make further progress. The parents spoken to are confident that teaching and learning are good.
- All staff tackle the use of derogatory language and make it clear that it is unacceptable. Pupils have been provided with effective support to ensure that they are fully aware of the implications of any racist comments. This has had a positive impact on their language in class and around the centre.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The centre's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Parents are clear that staff do all that they can in the pupils' best interests. Staff and pupils are also positive about all aspects of personal development and welfare.
- The established staff team have very good relationships with the pupils and are excellent role models. Pupils fully understand that positive behaviour is rewarded and negative behaviour is not ignored. A parent explained that his son is very proud when he earns a 'green card', which he takes home as proof of his good behaviour. The use of fixed-term exclusions is reducing but the school has not yet developed sufficient facilities to support pupils in the centre rather than sending them home.
- Pupils are made welcome in the morning and enjoy their breakfast. They are prepared for learning and look forward to meeting the staff. The classrooms are attractive learning environments and displays have a strong focus on personal development. However, no opportunities are provided by the centre for pupils to share activities at the end of the day or on residential trips.
- The school council has been elected and contributes to developments in the centre. Pupils are actively involved in fundraising for charities and centre activities.

- There is very comprehensive recording of any behaviour incidents. Any bullying incidents are dealt with effectively and staff make it clear that bullying is unacceptable.
- Staff have accessed the full range of training to help keep pupils safe by, for example, preventing radicalisation and extremism and promoting e-safety. Health and safety and risk assessments are very thorough.
- The good links with other agencies make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development and welfare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and pupils make clear progress in their attitudes to learning.
- There is a planned approach to the management of behaviour and the established staff team has become far more confident and consistent in its work.
- The pupils' behaviour in the assembly was outstanding. They were proud to show their work and many gained a weekly award for their behaviour. Although other pupils were disappointed at not gaining sufficient points for an award, they were accepting of the fairness of the system. This is a good measure of the progress made in developing their capacity to accept the need for rules and consequences to behaviour.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and they have a member of staff whom they can talk with if they have any concerns. Many of them are initially reliant on staff they know well but take increased responsibility for their own behaviour as they settle in the centre.
- Attendance is good and many pupils with a long-term reluctance to attend any school start attending the centre. A parent commented that he is amazed his son is keen to arrive at the centre promptly in the mornings, which is a major change for the better. Good attendance is acknowledged and many pupils take great pride in their attendance record.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress information confirms that pupils make good progress from their starting points at the centre. The pupils' previous work confirms that progress is consistently good and staff are insistent that work has to be completed if missed.
- The small number of pupils at Key Stage 1 make particularly good progress.
- The high proportion of pupils making expected and above expected progress in English and maths is closing the gap with their mainstream peers. There has been an effective focus on boosting progress in maths, which is now good. Currently, staff are ensuring that progress in spelling, punctuation and grammar matches the other aspects of English work. The production of high-quality writing is given high priority and pupils are very proud of their writing folders.
- The effective use of pupil premium funding ensures that the disadvantaged pupils make as good progress as the other pupils in the centre. This is because of the individual planning and work that is carefully tailored to meet their needs. There is no difference in the progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because of the attention to detail, which ensures that they have appropriate challenge in their learning. The deputy headteacher makes a significant contribution to ensuring that the needs of these pupils are met.
- Photo journals show the pupils' positive involvement in a wide range of activities during the centre's day. They develop the ability to listen and act on each other's opinions when, for example, discussing the features of different religions.
- The pupils identified by the school as the most able make good progress. Some, for example, showed a good understanding of the features of the Globe Theatre and the link with Shakespeare. They respond well to challenging questions and are confident in the use of dictionaries to extend their vocabulary.
- Pupils who attend the centre for a few weeks are well prepared for the return to their mainstream school. Staff have to work very hard to sustain the motivation of pupils who have to wait a while for a place at their next school.

School details

Unique reference number	135253
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10002502

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	22
Chair	Gary Linford
Headteacher	Jennifer Shuttleworth
Telephone number	0121 559 1043
Website	www.primrose.sandwell.sch.uk
Email address	Jennifer.norton@primrose.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2013

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been permanently appointed during the past 12 months.
- Half of the current pupils have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. The other pupils spend a short time at the centre to improve their behaviour and learning skills. They are dual-registered, as they remain on the roll of their mainstream school.
- None of the pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- Over a third of the pupils have education, health and care plans and others are undergoing statutory assessment.
- All the pupils currently on roll are boys.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is well above average. This extra government funding is provided to give additional support to pupils who are in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has additional primary physical education and sports funding.
- Two thirds of the pupils are from families of White British Heritage.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team spent time in 11 lessons, most of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed pupils during their breakfast club, at playtime and joined them in assembly.
- Discussions were held with pupils and 12 responses to the online questionnaire were analysed.
- Inspectors had meetings with the leadership team, centre staff, members of the management committee and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed centre documents including the self-review form, centre development plan, external reports, behaviour and incident logs, safeguarding records, lesson plans, examples of pupils' work and the centre's progress information.
- Ten responses by staff to the online questionnaire were analysed.
- Emails from schools that the centre works with were considered.
- Inspectors had meetings with two parents and considered responses to a recent questionnaire. There were not enough responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to add to the evidence base.

Inspection team

David Smith, lead inspector

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