

# Wemms Education Centre

50 the Street, Ashtead, Surrey KT21 1AZ

## Inspection dates

9–11 May 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Outstanding teaching ensures that pupils learn exceptionally well. Highly skilled teachers, with excellent subject knowledge, offer one-to-one tutoring and small-group sessions. Consequently, pupils make exceptional progress, particularly in mathematics, science, English and the humanities.
- Staff, parents and pupils share the principal's clear vision and commitment to improving pupils' life chances. Parents are rightly overwhelmingly positive about the difference the school makes to their child's attitude, outlook and progress.
- Pupils who join after years of failure in previous schools make rapid progress towards fulfilling their academic and social potential.
- Pupils benefit from a rich and varied curriculum which enables them to develop their independence and social skills. Pupils are enthused by their experience of literature, physical activities and social opportunities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well.
- Pupils are happy and love coming to school. They attend well and make the most of their lessons. Their behaviour improves markedly over time and is outstanding.
- Close scrutiny of pupils' progress and a constant drive to improve are threaded through the work of leaders. Leaders have a thorough understanding of the many strengths in teaching and learning. However, leaders' analysis of other areas of their work is less well developed.
- Governance arrangements are in their infancy. Although governors provide useful mentoring to school leaders, arrangements are too informal, and governors do not provide as much challenge and rigour as they should.
- Parents rightly believe that the website could be utilised better. It is currently not up to date.
- Some policies and procedures are underdeveloped and informal. Leaders recognise that some need updating, such as those used for performance management.
- Pupils are safe in school. Staff's detailed knowledge of all pupils assures their well-being and minimises risk.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding meet regulations. However, some procedures do not reflect best practice.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management to outstanding by:
  - formalising the work of governors so that there are robust systems for the challenge and support of leaders
  - strengthening the analysis of all areas of the school's work so that it is as detailed as that seen for teaching, learning and assessment
  - making sure the website is utilised and kept up to date
  - making sure that school leaders, including governors, maintain good practice through implementing effective policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding.
- Ensure that pupils achieve as well in art as they do in other subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The principal, through her clear vision and calm sense of purpose, provides effective leadership at the school. She has successfully established a culture where everyone is working together to achieve the best outcomes possible for the pupils.
- Since opening the school, the principal has focused resolutely on the quality of education provided for the pupils. Consequently, her efforts have ensured that the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and the behaviour of pupils are outstanding.
- Leaders' monitoring of the school is effective. The principal undertakes timely observations of teaching and learning and provides useful feedback to staff. Leaders make very good use of assessment information to evaluate the progress and attainment of the pupils. The principal uses what she has learned from her observations diligently to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, she is very well versed in what is going well and where to focus leaders' efforts to bring about further improvements in teachers' practice.
- Leaders' evaluations of other aspects of the school's work are less sharp. The principal makes good use of the views of staff, parents and pupils. However, leaders' evaluations of the impact of their own work on the effectiveness of the school are much less detailed than that seen for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Performance management is broadly effective. Staff report that the quality of support and guidance they are given is invaluable. They work tirelessly and with enthusiasm to provide the education that pupils need, because they recognise that their work is highly valued and they appreciate the clear and developmental feedback that they receive. They are clear about what they do well and what they need to do to improve further. Consequently, teaching continuously improves. Nevertheless, leaders rightly recognise that the policies and processes for performance management could be formalised further and improved.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted exceptionally well. Leaders, with the support of staff, have successfully established a strong sense of community throughout the school. Regular events to celebrate the diversity of British culture are scheduled on the school calendar, including different religious celebrations. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own place within British society and to take an active part in the local community. With effective support from staff, many pupils make significant gains in their self-confidence and feelings of self-worth. They take responsibility for their own actions. Visits to places of cultural significance, such as the Houses of Parliament, help them to understand and appreciate British culture.
- Fundamental British values are promoted very well. The value of diversity and equal rights is promoted through the work of the school at every level. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The school's curriculum meets the needs of the pupils very well. Pupils benefit from

bespoke individual programmes of study which cater exceptionally well to their individual needs. Pupils receive one-to-one tuition from specialist teachers across a range of subjects, including the individual sciences, English, mathematics, the humanities and the arts. The school offers specialist teaching in Spanish. Pupils visit a local leisure centre on a weekly basis to access physical education lessons. These include opportunities to swim, kickbox, play racquet sports and use the gym equipment.

- Parents are unreserved in their praise for the school, how it is led and the difference that has been made to their children. They unanimously report that the school has been transformational for their children.
- The principal has rightly been developing the roles of middle leaders. Many are already taking an active role and making a difference in their areas of responsibility. For example, the recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has worked closely with pupils and their parents to co-produce academic, social and personal targets for each individual. She monitors the progress pupils are making against these targets to deepen leaders' understanding of where the school has the most impact on pupils.
- Leaders have made effective use of external support. For example, the principal has encouraged regular visits from consultants who help her to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment effectively. The principal has shrewdly encouraged three of these consultants to act as governors.

### **Governance**

- The principal, who is also the proprietor, has sensibly been working with a variety of stakeholders to establish a governing body. For example, there are already a number of external stakeholders, a member of staff and a parent who are named as governors. The chair of the governors has an education background and regularly visits the school. Consequently, he has given useful guidance and support to the principal as she has established the procedures needed when opening a school. His high profile means that staff are fully aware of who he is and the role he is undertaking. Other governors also visit the school regularly and together they have a thorough understanding of what the school does well and where improvements are needed.
- The principal rightly recognises that governance does not yet demonstrate outstanding leadership and management. Despite the skills and expertise of governors and their knowledge of the school, arrangements remain too informal. Paperwork does not always reflect the useful activities that governors undertake. Nor do records show the strength in the support and challenge that governors provide for the principal. This is rightly an area for development identified by the school.
- The school's website remains out of date.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements, and staff carry out their duties diligently to ensure that pupils are safe. However, a very small number of administrative procedures related to safeguarding do not demonstrate outstanding practice. For example, although staff had a clear understanding of 'Keeping children safe in education 2016', demonstrating that they had read it, there was no record that this had happened.
- All staff have received appropriate training and so are clear what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of any pupils. Leaders and staff are clear about what they

should do if they need to manage an allegation about a member of staff.

- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are made during recruitment processes and recorded accurately on the single central register. Appropriate references are sought from previous employers. Leaders usefully review how to improve the information that they ask for, and so many recent changes have strengthened the effectiveness of their recruitment processes.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Teachers plan lessons carefully to capture the enthusiasm of pupils. Lessons are delivered in an encouraging environment that allows pupils to flourish despite their pronounced anxiety. Teachers are highly skilled and have very strong subject knowledge. Teachers' clarity of explanation helps them to impart this knowledge exceptionally well. Consequently, pupils value highly the opportunities to learn in one-to-one sessions, and to make rapid and sustained progress.
- Excellent relationships underpin the success of the school. Teachers and leaders ensure that pupils feel very secure in their environment and so are ready to learn. Positive and clear praise is a particular feature of the encouragement pupils are given, helping them to develop confidence and succeed. Teachers successfully understand pupils' needs and interests, and plan lessons that engage them as a result.
- The use of assessment is very well developed. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to understand exactly what pupils can do and what they need to learn to make strong progress. They use their knowledge of each individual to plan lessons that are precisely targeted on what pupils need to do, building on what pupils have already learned or understand. Pupils report that their tutors are particularly effective at helping them 'go through their work and fix the issues'.
- Teachers make good use of what they know about pupils to plan work that is highly challenging for pupils of all abilities. For example, the most able pupils are challenged consistently because of the bespoke learning experiences they are given. Similarly, those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan are given an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The teaching of the core subjects, including separate sciences, English and mathematics, is excellent. There are similar strengths in the teaching of the humanities, technology, and personal, social, health and economic education. However, the standard of work achieved in art by pupils is not consistently at the same levels as that seen in the other subjects. Leaders have rightly identified the need to address this.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents and pupils report consistently that the school has been transformational for them. Many pupils have had extended periods of time out of school, and the majority suffer with significant anxiety issues. Nevertheless, very soon after arriving at Wemms,

they develop a love of learning again, settle quickly and make excellent progress at the school. Consequently, pupils make rapid gains in their emotional well-being and sense of self-worth. All the pupils spoken to reported that their time at Wemms has been significantly better than their previous school experiences.

- The curriculum is used effectively to promote pupils' physical well-being. Pupils particularly benefit from the weekly experiences they are offered to learn at the local leisure centre. Through this, pupils have successfully broadened their interests and so are learning to lead more healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders promote the value of diversity effectively. This helps pupils to rapidly develop a greater sense of self-worth and identity. Consequently, the curriculum supports improvements in pupils' emotional well-being very effectively.
- Older pupils have access to useful and impartial careers advice. Leaders have made appropriate links to education establishments in the local area. These links ensure that leaders can help pupils access useful events, such as the Surrey careers show. Regular one-to-one discussions help to raise pupils' aspirations. Many pupils go on to achieve better qualifications and placements at colleges and universities than they had thought possible before coming to the school.
- Pupils demonstrate that they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Through the regular life skills lessons they experience, they learn a number of skills that will be useful in everyday life. For example, pupils learn about the dangers of sharing personal information online and the risks of making friends through social media.
- Pupils have regular lessons in independent living. For example, cookery lessons focus on developing pupils' repertoire of recipes needed to prepare and cook the sort of healthy meals that make up a balanced diet over time. Pupils recognise the value in what they are taught as helping them to prepare for their futures.
- Although safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements, some systems and processes are not as embedded as they could be. Leaders rightly recognise that they could do more to secure practice at the level of good practice.
- Some pupils still struggle to engage with people they do not already know.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate consistently strong attitudes in lessons and to their work. There is a strong sense of community among those who attend the school. Pupils look out for and support each other.
- Pupils' conduct is exemplary. They reflect the greater self-worth that they feel as part of the Wemms community. Pupils share in each other's successes and recognise when they have done well for themselves. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their own actions and rise to the high expectations and levels of trust they are shown by staff.
- Pupils report that there is no bullying at the school and this is reflected in the school's logs. Parents did not express any concerns about the safety of their children at the school.
- Records of serious incidents demonstrate that these are exceptionally rare.
- Pupils' attendance is transformed rapidly when they arrive at the school. Many have had significant periods out of education or have been educated at home before arriving at

Wemms. However, on arrival, pupils settle quickly and enjoy their learning. Overall pupils' attendance is typically much higher than that seen in mainstream education.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Outstanding**

- Pupils start at the school at different ages from each other and with different levels of attainment. Typically, they have come from either being educated at home or having struggled in mainstream education for some time. Many have learning difficulties associated with dyslexia or dyscalculia.
- From the moment they are admitted to the school, leaders undertake a thorough and comprehensive assessment of their personal, social and academic needs. Teachers plan individual programmes of study that are precisely aimed at pupils' interests and aptitudes. This helps to ensure that the vast majority of pupils make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who leave the school at the end of Year 11 typically attain results that are far superior to those attained in mainstream settings. For example, for the last two years 100% of pupils have left the school with 5 GCSEs, grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.
- Currently, all pupils who have left the school have gone on to education, employment or training.
- Different groups in the school make similar exceptional progress to each other. For example, girls and boys make similar progress, despite there being very few girls in the school. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers.
- The most able pupils often make very good progress. Staff have very high expectations for what these pupils should achieve. Consequently, they receive lessons that often require them to think much more for themselves and so they deepen their understanding of more complex concepts.

## School details

Unique reference number	142416
DfE registration number	936/6006
Inspection number	10025994

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6–16 (with temporary agreement to take pupils up to the age of 20)
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Mrs Joy Wemms
Chair	Mr Alan Dean
Headteacher	Mrs Joy Wemms
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,200
Telephone number	01372 276 499
Website	<a href="http://school.wemms.eu">school.wemms.eu</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:wemmsmaths@gmail.com">wemmsmaths@gmail.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Wemms Education Centre is a special independent school offering education to pupils who cannot cope in mainstream education. The school is housed in three separate buildings a short distance apart on the same street in Ashted, in Surrey.
- The principal is also the proprietor.



- The school offers alternative provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who have school phobia, those with social, emotional and mental health issues, and pupils who have been excluded from full-time education. The school works closely with Surrey County Council and local schools.
- Pupils follow the full range of national curriculum subjects, with many of them entered for GCSE subjects at the end of Year 11.
- The school is registered for 12 pupils, aged seven to 20. At the time of the inspection, there were 12 full-time pupils on roll and two part-time pupils. Two pupils are studying for post-16 qualifications.
- The majority of the pupils at the school are White British and there are significantly more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below average.
- At the time of the inspection, there were seven pupils who had a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

## Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons, most jointly with the principal. He observed pupils' behaviour in and around the school, and during lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the designated lead for safeguarding, staff at the school, the chair of the governing board, and informally with parents and pupils.
- Her Majesty's Inspector looked closely at school documentation, including leaders' analyses of how well they believe the school is doing, records relating to safeguarding, health and safety documentation, assessment information, and records relating to attendance and exclusions.
- There were few responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Her Majesty's Inspector reviewed feedback provided to the school by parents as part of leaders' analyses of their own effectiveness. There were no responses from staff to the online questionnaire. However, leaders provided the results of their own staff survey, based on the same set of questions.

## Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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