

Summerhill School

Lodge Lane, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 9XE

Inspection dates

3–4 April 2019

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 resolute, determined and committed leadership of the executive headteacher has resulted in the positive transformation of the school since the previous inspection.
- Leadership at all levels is effective. Leaders are well trained and have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their respective areas.
- The governing body has a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors hold leaders robustly to account for their plans and actions.
- Pupils currently at the school make good progress across year groups and in the different subjects.
- The progress that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make is improving strongly. Leaders are successfully making sure that teachers are well trained to meet the needs of these pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in key stage 3. In key stage 4, although improving, some of these pupils make weaker progress than others in the school.
- The quality of teaching is good, particularly in English. Teachers know their pupils well and they plan learning that is well matched to the different learning needs of pupils.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) awareness as well as their personal development.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, well mannered and courteous.
- Bullying is rare. As a result, pupils feel safe at school.
- Leaders do not check the impact of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils well enough. The impact of the additional Year 7 catch-up funding is similarly not well monitored.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' understanding before moving them on to harder work. This means that occasionally pupils do not make good progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning in science requires improvement.
- Leaders have improved communication with parents and carers. However, not all parents have confidence in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' outcomes by ensuring that all teachers consistently use a range of assessment strategies in lessons so that pupils are only moved on to more challenging work when they are ready to do so.
- Improve teaching and learning in science by making sure that:
 - teachers plan work that is accurately matched to pupils' skills and abilities
 - all teachers have the skills to teach the subject effectively.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers, including governors, by:
 - continuing to improve communication with parents so that all have confidence in the school
 - ensuring that strategies to support disadvantaged pupils are regularly and robustly evaluated for their impact so that these pupils make as good progress as other pupils
 - evaluating the impact of the additional Year 7 catch-up funding to ensure that it is having the desired effect of improving pupils' skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- With the support of the governing body and local authority, the executive headteacher has spearheaded wide-ranging changes since the previous inspection. Importantly, these changes included a major restructuring of the school, which has resulted in significant changes of staff since the previous inspection. The impact of this for pupils is that they are mostly taught well, and most are making good progress.
- The executive headteacher and the senior leadership team have positively transformed the culture and ethos of Summerhill School. Inspectors' meetings with different groups of staff, as well as the responses to Ofsted's staff survey, confirmed that most members of staff feel respected and supported. The survey showed that most staff who responded are proud to be a member of staff. The large majority of pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil survey said that they would recommend the school to a friend.
- Responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, in recent years indicate that parents have had some concerns about recommending the school to others and about how well it has been led and managed. Leaders and governors have rightly prioritised communication with parents in the school development plan. As a result, parental satisfaction with the school is now improving. However, although leaders' actions to improve parental satisfaction are having a positive impact, not all parents have confidence in the school.
- Leaders have robust procedures in place for checking that the quality of teaching is at least good. For example, the subject area reviews ensure that each subject leader evaluates the quality of teaching and learning regularly throughout the year. Subject leaders are both challenged and supported well by senior leaders during this process. As a result, the quality of teaching is continually improving, and any weaknesses are addressed in a timely manner.
- Subject leaders have been well trained to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning in their respective areas. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas.
- Staff training and development are effective. All staff are involved in regular whole-school training activities and staff also have bespoke training pathways. These enable different teachers to be supported to develop aspects of their practice that are specific to them. Staff whom inspectors spoke to said that they value this approach. This strategy is an important reason why teaching is typically good across the school.
- Leaders have accurately assessed the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, improvement planning is appropriately focused on key aspects of the school's work that need to improve. The accurate self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is underpinned by appropriately regular checks on pupils' progress. Leaders use all available information to identify where teaching needs to improve and, consequently, where pupils need to make better progress.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is good. Staff are well trained so that they understand how their teaching can be adapted to meet the learning needs of individual pupils, when appropriate. As a result, the progress that pupils with SEND

make is improving strongly.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well planned to meet the learning and personal development needs of pupils. For example, the house system is used to promote a wide range of personal qualities, such as self-confidence and leadership skills. The global learning lessons effectively provide pupils with opportunities to learn about British values. The range of educational visits and trips, as well as a well-attended and diverse programme of extra-curricular activities, makes a strong contribution to pupils' SMSC awareness and personal development.
- Although leaders are successfully narrowing the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in key stage 3, they are having less success in key stage 4. This is because strategies which the additional funding supports are not as robustly monitored for their impact as they could be.
- Use of the Year 7 catch-up funding to support those pupils who did not reach the expected standard in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is not monitored well enough by leaders. Consequently, leaders and governors cannot say for certain if their strategies are achieving good value for money.
- Senior leaders are working closely with science teachers and leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning in this subject. Plans are in place and action is being taken, but it is too early to see the impact of this.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is because members ensure that they receive appropriately detailed information about the school's performance regularly. Governors also have a programme of school visits. This is an effective strategy that adds to their ability to hold leaders robustly to account for the impact of their work.
- Members of the governing body are working effectively with the executive headteacher and local authority to eradicate the school's deficit budget. Good planning has taken place to ensure that the school has a balanced budget in the coming few years.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account for the impact of the additional pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up premium as well as they do in other areas. Minutes of meetings indicate that governors are working towards developing procedures to improve this in the near future. However, in the past they have not made sure that they receive appropriate information about how this funding is spent and the impact it is having on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained and kept fully up to date in all matters relating to safeguarding. They know what to look for if a child may be at risk and they know the procedures to be followed if they have any concerns. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school.
- Leaders keep a close eye on any safeguarding concerns and monitor any patterns or

trends that may be relevant to individual pupils. They use the expertise of external agencies well, and this ensures that any pupil who requires specific support receives it in a timely manner.

- During the inspection, some concerns were raised with the lead inspector by a member of staff regarding safeguarding procedures. The lead inspector followed these up with the safeguarding leader and executive headteacher. It was clear that there were no outstanding issues and that leaders were demonstrating good practice with respect to the alleged concerns.
- Pupils overwhelmingly feel safe, and the large majority of staff who responded to the survey agree that pupils are kept safe at school. Pupils are taught about a range of safety issues in assembly, tutor time and global learning lessons. As a result, they have an age-appropriate understanding of potential risks in a wide range of scenarios, including the risks associated with extremism. Pupils know how to keep safe when working online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The strong progress pupils make across the curriculum is a result of the good teaching they receive.
- Teachers know their pupils' skills and abilities well. They use this information to plan learning that is well matched to pupils' different levels of ability. For example, in a Year 8 technology lesson, low- and high-ability pupils had different work to complete, which resulted in pupils making good progress at their own level. In a religious studies lesson, low-ability pupils were very well supported to understand difficult concepts through the teacher's use of visual imagery.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. For example, many teachers provide pupils with examples of high-quality work. This means that pupils are clear about what they are expected to achieve as well as strategies for success. Inspectors observed many examples of how this approach results in good-quality learning, including in English, history and French.
- Questioning is used effectively by teachers. Probing questions which require pupils to think deeply are frequently used. This often results in pupils' producing work that shows a good level of understanding.
- Teachers regularly require pupils to assess each other's work. This is a good strategy that requires pupils to think about assessment criteria and reflect on the quality of their own work so that they can improve it.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to support and guide pupils to achieve progressively higher standards. For example, in GCSE classes, teachers use their good knowledge of examination requirements to plan work that helps pupils to move to higher grades.
- Teachers are increasingly planning work that is accurately matched to the learning needs of pupils with SEND. For example, in a religious studies lesson, the teacher provided pupils with effective support which enabled pupils to produce a good-quality piece of writing.

- The quality of teaching in English is a particular strength. Teachers typically apply their good subject knowledge to deliver appropriately fast-paced and interesting learning, which motivates pupils to achieve well.
- There are occasions when some teachers do not use assessment strategies as well as they could. For example, some pupils are sometimes moved on to harder work when they have not mastered the earlier concepts, including in mathematics. This results in weaker progress for pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning in science requires improvement. Teachers do not always match work to pupils' learning needs. This means that different groups of pupils are not always working at the right level for their ability, including the most able pupils. Some teachers do not have the necessary skills to teach the subject effectively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- An important aspect of the school ethos is that teachers communicate to pupils their genuine belief in pupils' academic ability and personal potential. This is evident in lessons and also through the house activities. For example, inspectors observed a house celebration assembly that was entirely managed and organised by pupils. Pupils demonstrated high levels of self-confidence and pride. Musical performances and public speaking were part of the assembly, and pupils showed good levels of mutual support by applauding the performances and listening attentively.
- Pupils told inspectors that they think the house system is a good way of helping them to work as a team as well as develop leadership skills. School leaders have made sure that pupils have opportunities to develop personal qualities through the numerous house activities that take place.
- Pupils are able to take on a range of responsibilities. For example, some members of the junior leadership team told inspectors that they feel that they have a voice in the school. They spoke of how they have influenced changes to the lunchtime food menu, for example.
- The global learning lessons provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their approach to learning, including promoting positive attitudes. Pupils also learn about safety matters as well as British values. The large majority of pupils who responded to the survey said that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and treat people equally.
- The curriculum supports pupils' physical and emotional health well. For example, there are many sporting activities that pupils can take part in. In the global learning lessons, pupils are helped to explore personal feelings and emotions. Pupils know who they can speak to if they have personal issues that they require help to resolve. The family welfare officer is also available to support pupils and families, when appropriate.
- Pupils dress smartly and wear the relatively new school uniform with pride. Pupils value learning and have good attitudes to their studies. The vast majority of pupils work hard and try their best. Many are developing good levels of resilience and a determination to

keep trying until success is achieved.

- The school site is almost litter free. This is indicative of the pupils' sense of 'social responsibility', which the school is successfully developing in pupils.
- Bullying is rare at the school. When it does occur, pupils are confident that staff will help them to resolve matters.
- The well-planned careers education programme makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils have a good understanding about careers and the various options that may be open to them in the future. Careers education also contributes to the strong attitudes to learning, which most pupils display.
- The small number of pupils who attend Halesowen College enjoy their studies. This is because the widened curriculum allows pupils to study courses that interest them which the school is not able to offer. Appropriate checks are made to ensure that pupils attend and are safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. Pupils behave respectfully towards staff and their peers. This is because staff model good behaviour and respectful conduct.
- Pupils who attend Halesowen College behave well because they enjoy their studies and are motivated to succeed.
- The overall attendance of pupils is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school is reducing this year. The school has well-coordinated procedures in place for checking attendance and following up any absences.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND has not been as good as for other pupils in the school in the past. However, attendance for these groups of pupils is improving.
- Exclusions from school have been far too high in the past. However, exclusion rates are dramatically reducing this year. Exclusions for disadvantaged pupils have halved compared to last year. An important reason why exclusions are reducing is a combination of improved behaviour and the school's use of alternative strategies to exclusion. In addition, the school works closely with other schools and parents so that pupils can be moved between schools to support improvements in behaviour, when necessary.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils currently at the school are making good progress. This is because they are benefiting from the improvements that have been made to teaching over time.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3 are achieving well, and there is no significant difference between the progress of this group of pupils and that of others in the school. However, in key stage 4, some disadvantaged pupils are not achieving well enough in some subjects. Leaders have implemented personalised support strategies

for those who are falling behind, and these are starting to have a positive impact. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 did not make good enough progress in 2016 and 2018, although many achieved well in 2017.

- Pupils with SEND have not achieved well enough in the past. However, as a result of the good training which staff now receive, pupils with SEND are making stronger progress this year. Work in pupils' books confirms that pupils' progress is improving strongly because work is increasingly pitched at the right level for individual pupils.
- For the past few years, low-ability pupils in Year 11 have made weak progress. This year, low-ability pupils in most year groups are making good progress. This is because pupils are receiving better support in lessons than they have in the past.
- The most able pupils usually have their learning needs met well by teachers. As a result, these pupils regularly enjoy a good level of challenge in lessons, which helps them to achieve the high standards that they are capable of. As a result, the majority of the most able pupils are making good progress in many subjects.
- Year 11 pupils have made above-average progress in English, mathematics and humanities for the past two years. Outcomes in Year 11 improved significantly in 2017 and they were sustained in these subjects in 2018. However, across a range of other subjects, including science, Year 11 pupils made progress that was no better than average in 2017 and 2018.
- Published progress data for Year 11 pupils last year indicates a degree of variability between different subjects. However, as a result of the impact that improvements to teaching are having on pupils' progress this year, differences in pupils' progress between different subjects are less marked.
- Pupils are not making consistently good progress in science. The progress that pupils make in the different year groups is too variable because of weaknesses in the quality of teaching in this subject.
- Most of the pupils who attend Halesowen College are achieving well. This is because they are following courses that interest them and that are at the right level for their ability, including level 1 and level 2 qualifications.
- The good outcomes in English and mathematics for the past two years have prepared Year 11 pupils well for future employment with training or further study.

School details

Unique reference number	103854
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10088475

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,009
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Fletcher
Executive Headteacher	James Bowkett
Telephone number	01384 816165
Website	www.summerhill.dudley.sch.uk
Email address	data@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school is a local authority maintained school.
- The executive headteacher joined the school just before the previous full inspection, which took place in November 2016.
- There has been a significant change of staff since the previous inspection.
- Ofsted conducted a monitoring inspection of the school in June 2018. This was because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about safeguarding arrangements, aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance) and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the school. Inspectors judged safeguarding to be effective, but identified several other areas for improvement.
- A small number of pupils attend Halesowen College for one afternoon each week. Pupils study animal care and performing arts courses.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to the national average.
- The large majority of pupils who attend the school are of White British heritage.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in a wide range of subjects in all year groups. Senior leaders joined inspectors for many of these observations.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils. Inspectors also spoke to many pupils informally at social times. Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders as well as three groups of staff. The lead inspector held meetings with a group of governors, including the chair of governors, and with two representatives from the local authority. One parent met with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of policies, the school's own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and its development planning, records of lesson monitoring, information about pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and samples of pupils' work.
- The views of parents who responded to Parent View were considered. Inspectors also considered responses to Parent View for the 2017/18 academic year. Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's staff survey and considered the views of pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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Mark Bailie	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Parker	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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