

Inspection of New Leaf Centre

Stroud Avenue, Willenhall, Walsall WV12 4EG

Inspection dates:

5 to 6 May 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at the New Leaf site and those who go to alternative provision are well looked after. The pastoral support given to them is effective. Every pupil matters. Pupils say that they feel safe. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, pupils say that they have someone they can talk to. They trust staff to sort it out.

Behaviour in most lessons is good. When pupils find it difficult to manage their emotions, staff are quick to help. They know their pupils well. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. As a result, pupils typically refocus on what they should be doing.

Pupils at the New Leaf site study a range of subjects. Many pupils achieve well. Some pupils with poor attendance do not do as well as they might. In some subjects, teachers plan what pupils will learn effectively. However, in other subjects, teachers do not always plan their lessons well enough to help pupils remember what they learn.

Pupils who attend alternative provision enjoy it. Leaders work hard to match programmes to pupils' interests. However, leaders do not check carefully enough the quality of these programmes. This means that some pupils may not be achieving as well as they might.

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

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. They have improved the curriculum so that pupils learn a range of subjects. In some subjects, leaders have planned and sequenced pupils' learning effectively. This helps pupils to learn more, and remember more of what has been taught. In other subjects, such as history and geography, leaders' planning is not ordered in a way that helps pupils build on their learning over time.

Leaders continue to prioritise reading. Pupils at the New Leaf site do their '5 a day' in form time. This includes reading five pages of a book and completing five mathematics activities. Pupils in key stage 4 can get extra help from the specialist reading teacher.

Leaders make sure that all pupils at alternative provision can achieve a range of qualifications, including English and mathematics. This is a significant improvement. Key workers check pupils' well-being at alternative provision. As a result, most pupils attend regularly and enjoy what they are doing. However, leaders do not routinely check the quality of the programmes providers offer. Leaders plan to do this in the future. However, it means that some pupils may not be doing as well as they might.

Before pupils start at New Leaf, the special educational needs and/or disabilities team meet with pupils and their families. Pupils complete assessments. Leaders use

the information from the meeting and the results of the assessments well. It helps them to identify the extra support pupils and their families may need. As a result, the number of pupils who have been assessed and given a draft education, health and care (EHC) plan has significantly increased over time.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. As a result, pupils are polite and respectful. Mostly, they engage well in their learning. The amount of learning time lost due to exclusions is significantly reducing over time.

Leaders carefully check pupils' attendance. Consequently, some pupils have improved their attendance from low starting points. Although there are signs of improvement, attendance remains low. This is hindering some pupils' progress.

Many improvements have been made to how pupils are prepared for their future. For example, pupils at the New Leaf site take part in the world at work week. However, leaders now need to plan further opportunities to support pupils in their career choices across subjects. Leaders have checked the careers advice alternative providers give to their pupils. They have plans in place to check more closely the quality of this advice and guidance. Most pupils in Year 11 know what they will be doing when they leave New Leaf. This is a significant improvement compared to last year.

Leaders take care of their staff. All staff say they are proud to work at the school. They say they are well supported by leaders. Staff value the training leaders provide for them. This includes how to support pupils' mental health and well-being.

The management committee is ambitious for what New Leaf and its pupils can achieve. They have the necessary skills and knowledge to hold leaders to account for their actions. More members have been co-opted on to the board. Minutes of meetings show that governors ask the right questions of leaders. Link governors now oversee aspects of the school's work. However, it is too early to see the impact of this new development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and take their welfare seriously. They quickly report any concerns so that appropriate action is taken quickly when needed.

The systems for safeguarding are robust. Staff receive regular updates and training. This includes how to support pupils with additional needs. The risks that pupils face in the local area are identified and addressed well. Leaders work effectively with a range of services. Pupils and their families get the help they need when they need it.

Records are detailed and well organised. Adults who work at, or visit the school, are appropriately checked.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils who attend alternative provision can access a range of qualifications. However, leaders do not routinely check the quality of the implementation of these programmes. This means that some pupils may not be achieving as well as they might. Leaders need to develop a monitoring programme that routinely checks the quality of the implementation of the programmes to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum at the New Leaf site. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. However, in some subjects lessons are not systematically building on what pupils have learned in the past. This limits pupils' learning. Leaders need to plan a well-sequenced curriculum in every subject that builds on pupils' knowledge over time.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance well in school and in alternative provision. They use a range of strategies to improve attendance. For some individual pupils with particularly low starting points, this is beginning to have an impact. However, attendance overall is low. This inhibits pupils' progress and personal development. Leaders need to continue to work with parents and carers to improve the attendance of pupils who are regularly absent from school so that they make better progress.
- Leaders have made some improvements in how they prepare pupils for their future. For example, they are using the Gatsby Benchmarks to evaluate the careers provision on offer. Leaders have completed an audit of careers provision across alternative providers. However, they have not formally checked the quality of provision for individual pupils. This means that some pupils may not be aware of all the further education or employment and training choices available to them. Leaders need to formalise their approach to personal development to ensure all pupils have a good understanding of the opportunities available to them to prepare them for their next steps.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	134523
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10184709
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	
Headteacher	Stu Evans
Website	www.newleaf.walsall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 to 19 April 2018

Information about this school

- The New Leaf site has recently moved to new premises.
- At the time of this inspection, New Leaf had pupils on roll from Year 2 to Year 11.
- New Leaf currently uses 10 providers of alternative provision for around 48 pupils, either on a full-time or part-time basis. The providers used are Walsall College, Walsall Construction Training Limited, Peak Pursuits, NOVA training, JP Alternative Education, Elite Training, Bloxwich Community Partnership, The Ladder School, Community Footprints Services and Alpha training.
- Pupils attending New Leaf have been permanently excluded from their previous school. Many of them have an EHC plan or are undergoing an assessment for a range of needs.

Information about this inspection

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, members of the management committee, including the chair, and two representatives of the local

authority. An inspector visited three alternative providers used by the school and spoke to a fourth on the telephone.

- The inspection focused mainly on English and mathematics. At the New Leaf site, inspectors spoke to leaders, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. On the visits to alternative providers, an inspector talked to leaders and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- An inspector checked the single central register and the procedures for the recruitment of staff. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and checked pupils' records.
- Inspectors reviewed the 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were not enough responses to Ofsted Parent View for these to be considered. There were no free-text responses.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Pollitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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