

Inspection of Summerfield Education Centre

Auckland Drive, Smith's Wood, Birmingham B36 0DD

Inspection dates: 25 to 26 May 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have transformed this school since its last section 5 inspection two years ago. It has improved in all areas. The school's staff form a strong and committed team. They care for pupils exceptionally well, making sure they are safe and get any extra help they need. Pupils trust staff to support them when they need help.

Pupils value the second chance in education that Summerfield gives them. They behave well and are respectful towards adults and each other. However, despite some improvement in attendance, approximately a quarter of pupils still do not attend school as often as they should.

Pupils study an appropriate range of subjects. Teachers expect them to work hard and to achieve the best academic qualifications they can.

The school makes pupils' personal development a high priority. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is taught very well. Careers education is a strength of the school.

Leaders know that the education the school provides still needs to improve more. Pupils' learning in some subjects is not well planned at the moment. Staff do not encourage pupils to read as effectively as they could.

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

Until recently, the school has been subject to a consultation about its possible closure. Because of this, leaders have been unable to appoint permanent teachers when vacancies arise. This has led to several changes of teacher in some subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Teaching in these subjects is effective. However, the development of learning and assessment has been slower than it would otherwise have been. It is to leaders' credit that they have secured improvement in these subjects despite the challenges they have faced.

Pupils now study a broad range of subjects in all years. There is a strong focus on developing basic skills, for example in English and mathematics. Additionally, pupils enjoy studying several creative subjects, including art, music and food technology. Learning is well planned in these subjects. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 study towards appropriate academic qualifications.

Pupils study aspects of history, geography and religious education (RE). However, their learning in these subjects is rather haphazard. For example, pupils learn a little about Elizabethan England when they read Shakespeare's plays. Leaders have not planned what they want pupils to learn in these subjects in the same way as they have in other subjects.

When pupils join the school, staff quickly assess their academic ability and any additional needs they have. Leaders then plan a personalised programme for each pupil. Any pupils who struggle with reading are given specialist support to help them catch up. Most pupils are proficient readers. However, many do not enjoy reading because they do not have a wide vocabulary and they find some books difficult to understand.

Behaviour is the area that has improved the most since Ofsted inspected the school two years ago. Leaders have a policy of encouraging pupils to think through the impact of their actions. They describe the school as 'a restorative school'. This approach has proved successful. Physical intervention from staff is now very rare. The school's use of fixed-term exclusions has decreased dramatically.

The school provides remote education for a very small number of pupils. Teachers set work for them and mentors check in with them at the end of each day. Some pupils attend school for only part of each day. Leaders review these pupils' timetables each week. Remote education and part-time attendance are used appropriately as part of a strategy to encourage pupils to attend school more.

Leaders put as much emphasis on pupils' personal development as they do on academic achievement. The school has an excellent PSHE education programme taught through all subjects and in separate lessons. Careers education is strong. Pupils receive one-to-one careers advice and undertake work experience placements. They are well prepared for their next steps when they leave the school.

The school provides pupils with a wide range of activities to broaden their horizons and develop their character. These include visits to art galleries, theatres and places of worship.

Members of the school's management committee have contributed well to the school's improvement. They provide good quality support and robust challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is the school's top priority. Pupils are safe in school. They feel safe and well supported. Staff are alert to any signs that pupils might need extra help. They pass concerns to leaders who deal with the concerns swiftly. Leaders are tenacious in getting pupils the help they need from external agencies, when appropriate.

The PSHE education curriculum helps pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Leaders adjust the program, using their knowledge of local issues. For example, pupils have recently been taught about the dangers they might face when online or from county lines gangs.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have been unable to appoint permanent teachers for some time because of the possibility that the school might close. This has led to the school having a succession of temporary teachers in some subjects. Although these subjects have curriculum plans, including assessment procedures, the lack of permanent subject specialists has meant that they have not been reviewed or honed as well as they ought. The threat of closure has recently been lifted and the school is set to remain open. If the quality of education is to continue to improve, leaders must be able to ensure that the school has stable subject-specific expertise in English, mathematics and science.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum considerably since the previous section 5 inspection. It is now fit for purpose, with an appropriate balance of academic subjects and focus on personal development. Most subjects are planned appropriately so that pupils' learning builds over time. However, learning in the humanities subjects of history, geography and RE is not planned well at the moment. Leaders should decide what they want pupils to learn in history, geography and RE, and then plan an appropriate curriculum in these subjects.
- The school has very few pupils who struggle to read. These pupils are supported well. Although almost all pupils are able to decode words, many do not read widely. One key reason is that they do not possess a wide vocabulary. Consequently, they find it difficult to understand many books and texts. Leaders should put into place a whole-school strategy to increase pupils' vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension skills.
- Improving attendance has been a high priority for some time. Leaders have employed a number of strategies to improve attendance, and these have enjoyed some success. Individual pupils' attendance is generally higher than it was in their previous school. However, a significant minority of pupils do not attend school regularly enough, and a very small number do not attend at all. Leaders should continue to work towards all pupils attending school regularly and full time.

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	133531
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10184724
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of management committee	Yvonne Obaidy
Headteacher	Tina Whitehouse
Website	www.summerfieldec.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last section 5 inspection, one assistant headteacher has left the school. Two members of staff have been added to the senior leadership team. One has responsibility for behaviour and inclusion and the other oversees teaching and learning. Three members of the management committee, who are responsible for governance, have left and have been replaced.
- The school relocated to its current site in September 2020.
- The school has reduced considerably its use of alternative provision. A very small number of pupils now study for part of the week at one of three alternative providers. These are Silver Birch School, Riverside Education Centre and Solihull College.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, three members of the management committee, including its chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, the school. Inspectors observed pupils at lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised several documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection. They checked that the single central record contained all required information.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors paid particular attention to English, mathematics, science and PSHE. In these subjects, they spoke with teachers and looked at pupils’ work.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Sarah Ashley

Ofsted Inspector

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