

# Inspection of Fox Hollies School and Performing Arts College

Highbury Community Campus, Queensbridge Road, Moseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B13 8QB

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 May 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Fox Hollies is a school focused on helping pupils find 'their place in the community'. All staff are dedicated to supporting young people to overcome barriers to learning. Encouraging pupils to be independent is a top priority. Relationships lie at the heart of this very special school and there is a warm and caring environment. Consequently, learning is calm and purposeful. Pupils are welcoming to visitors and eager to share what they have learned.

Every moment matters. A brand-new garden, new independent living skills flat and a new playground provide exciting learning areas. A new library has re-established the foundations for a love of reading and books. Visiting poets, artists and circus skills workshops enrich and inspire the opportunities provided for the pupils.

Helping all pupils to be able to communicate with the world around them is a top priority. All staff are dedicated to supporting young people to overcome their barriers to learning. Consequently, behaviour is positive across the school.

Leaders and staff closely monitor how the pupils interact together so that any perceived cases of bullying can be dealt with quickly. Consequently, bullying is very rare.

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

Since her appointment, the new headteacher, supported by a strong leadership team, has put in place a new curriculum and made a number of other positive changes. Staff and parents and carers are united in their praise for the developments that have taken place. A new curriculum and 'pathway model' of learning have enthused all. There is a strong, shared focus on meeting pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well and preparing them for the world around them. Leaders know that things still need to improve in some respects, but they are well on the way.

Staff quickly assess pupils' needs and put the provision in place to meet needs, focusing on overcoming any barriers to learning. For example, staff work hard to ensure that the pupils have suitable communication systems. The use of alternative and augmentative communication systems and signing ensure that pupils learn to, and can, make themselves understood. Most staff patiently wait to find out what pupils want to say and respond when needed. There are, however, a few cases where staff overload pupils with too much language and do not give them enough time to understand what has been said to them.

Leaders have constructed a new curriculum that aims to build on what pupils know, understand and have experienced. This curriculum is focused on building pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, the 'global learning' lessons start with their understanding of what they have experienced in Kings Heath to build up their knowledge about Birmingham as a city. However, some

lesson content does not build precisely enough on what pupils know or have remembered from previous lessons. This means that some pupils will struggle to understand because they do not have the prior knowledge that will help them understand that more complex knowledge.

Some pupils are part-way through learning to read when they start at Fox Hollies. Carefully chosen phonics programmes fill the gaps in what pupils have remembered from previous schools. Symbols above text in books support some pupils to read fluently and confidently while still developing the ability to decode and read words. Staff also make sure that all pupils, whether they can read independently or not, are able to experience the pleasure of hearing a range of books being read aloud. For those pupils with the most profound and complex needs, sensory stories enthuse a love of texts and stories.

Subjects such as mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) continue the focus on functional everyday living skills. For example, in the sixth form, leaders have developed a curriculum that promotes independent living skills such as cooking, cleaning and independent travel skills, and have also therefore developed a catch-up curriculum that prioritises these skills. However, on some occasions, staff do not always allow pupils to practise and test out their new-found knowledge because they intervene too quickly to support them.

Leaders make sure that the reasons for different behaviours are understood and the right plan is implemented where needed, so that pupils' needs are properly met. For example, personal profiles clearly identify what a pupil needs to be a calm, purposeful and successful learner.

Staff work hard to make sure that pupils are ready for the world around them. Pupils experience weekly trips into the community. Pupils are currently preparing an exhibition that will be displayed in the Midlands Arts Centre as part of a Commonwealth Games youth project about building common ground between people with SEND and mainstream audiences. From Year 9, careers information, education, advice and guidance are provided for all pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Through regular training, high expectations and strong communication systems, leaders have created a culture where children are safe. Weekly safeguarding team meetings involving all teachers raise the profile of those pupils who might be at risk. Consequently, even minor concerns are flagged up quickly and acted on. Staff keep secure and detailed records relating to child protection. Leaders and governors make sure that all required pre-employment checks are in place.

Leaders are now working on making sure that their written policies for safeguarding match the strong practice across the school.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to complete the process of reviewing the curriculum in all subjects within their identified timescale. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- The curriculum content for some subjects is not always clearly chosen to build on the prior knowledge and experience of the pupils. This means that sometimes, more complicated concepts are introduced without pupils having the secure previous knowledge that they need in order to understand a more complicated concept. This means that learning is sometimes confusing for these pupils. Leaders should continue developing their curriculum to make sure that the chosen content builds on what pupils know, understand and remember.
- Not all teaching staff take the pupils' speech, language and developmental communication stage into account when presenting new information. While some staff regularly use signing, not all do. Some adapt their language to take into account the words and phrases that pupils understand, but not all do this. Leaders should ensure that all interactions between staff and pupils are precisely matched to pupils' speech, language and communication knowledge.
- At times, staff provide too much support for pupils rather than helping them to develop their independence and their ability to solve problems, or to find out what they have learned, know and remember. Leaders should ensure that the promotion of learning behaviours is used to ensure that pupils can develop essential life skills and independent skills.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103625
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10210908
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	36
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Will Mauchline
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sinead Davies
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.foxhollies.bham.sch.uk">www.foxhollies.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher took up post in September 2019.
- A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2019.
- Since the previous inspection, a new playground, library, living skills flat and garden area have been created at the school.
- Programmes of study for older pupils meet the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, inspectors focused on the following subjects: communication, reading, global learning, science and PSHE. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors asked pupils, staff, leaders and governors about safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. They also found out about safety procedures and routines.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governors, teachers and pupils. Inspectors spoke to representatives from the local authority and two school improvement partners. They also talked informally with parents and carers, escorts, drivers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Harwood

Her Majesty's Inspector

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