

Inspection of Sheffield Inclusion Centre

Spring Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S2 2JQ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils join the school having been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. Many have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils join with mixed experiences of, and attitudes to, education. Adults gain the trust of pupils and make a positive difference to their lives. In turn, pupils come to realise that staff want the best for them. Adults' dedication and care supports pupils to rebuild their faith in themselves.

Many pupils need considerable assistance to manage their feelings and behaviour. Composed, persistent guidance from teachers, mentors and support staff helps pupils make more mature behaviour choices. If pupils become frustrated or anxious, staff are quick to step in and calm them down.

Pupils are safe and learn relevant strategies to keep themselves safe. Pupils tell staff about anxieties or concerns that they may have.

Pupils learn a curriculum that has reading at its core. Pupils develop knowledge of, and interest in, reading. This helps them experience success across the wider curriculum. Pupils appreciate the importance of learning, which one pupil summed up with, 'Before, I messed up. Now, I get my head down so I can get on in life.' Many gain qualifications that prepare them for their next steps.

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

This is an improved and growing multi-site school. Despite rising pupil numbers, staff understand each pupil's background, potential and needs. Leaders make accurate assessments of pupils' specific needs and then make decisions in pupils' best interests. Leaders allocate each pupil a mentor who is well placed to support them. As a result, the school provides pupils with the curriculum and care that they require.

Leaders have overhauled much of the curriculum. They have focused on the nuts and bolts of equipping pupils with the knowledge to make safe choices, manage their behaviour and experience academic success. This helps pupils to take their studies seriously. As a result, many pupils progress well in their time at the school.

Leaders consider reading to be one of the most important building blocks of a successful education. Pupils in the early stages of reading receive daily phonics sessions tailored to their needs. They read with staff each day. Pupils who find reading tricky receive skilled support. Pupils become more fluent, confident readers. Across all key stages, there are well-established routines to foster pupils' use of subject-specific vocabulary. For example, in food technology, science and mathematics, pupils make accurate use of technical language in their lessons and written work.

Leaders have set out a clear model of progression in most subjects. They are training staff to teach the curriculum well. Teachers know pupils' academic, social and behavioural needs. Typically, teachers craft learning and assessment so that pupils gain a secure knowledge of key facts one bit at a time. This provides pupils with a secure foundation on which to attempt more complex tasks. Leaders' work to outline exactly what pupils should learn is ongoing in a couple of subjects. Some staff are still getting to grips with how best to teach aspects of the curriculum in a couple of subjects.

The school runs a thorough programme to support pupils' well-being. Pupils receive high-quality pastoral care. They enjoy and gain a great deal from the 'grit and growth' and 'discovery' sessions. For example, pupils explained how horse riding, climbing and boxing sessions develop their self-confidence. Increasing numbers take part in the many activities that the school runs in the holidays. Learning mentors and support staff play an important role in fostering the obvious sense of belonging that many pupils feel. Pupils hold these staff in high esteem.

Older pupils receive suitable careers guidance. They enjoy studying vocational subjects, such as food technology and construction. Many pupils become ambitious for their futures and continue into further education or training.

Many pupils join the school with a history of low attendance and needing help to manage their behaviour. Leaders understand the causes of pupils' low attendance. The school does all it reasonably can to improve this, and most pupils' attendance improves. Staff take a patient and consistent approach to managing behaviour. Pupils understand what is expected of them through adults' guidance. Pupils' behaviour gets better over time.

Determined, courageous leadership and governance are bringing about many improvements at the school. Staff play their part in this process too. They respond well to leaders' clear direction and raised expectations. Most staff consider leaders to be supportive of their well-being and workload. A few do not and leaders have more to do to win over the hearts and minds of a small number of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have overhauled much of the curriculum. Some of this work is ongoing. In a few subjects, leaders have not set out precisely what pupils should learn. At times, teachers do not teach the curriculum with the same level of consistency as in many subjects. This slows learning. Leaders should set out exactly what pupils

should learn and continue to support teachers so that all subjects are taught consistently well.

- Leaders have raised expectations and brought about many improvements in pupils' best interests. Most staff understand these changes and consider leaders to be supportive of their workload and well-being. A small proportion do not. Leaders should review their systems to gather, and respond to, staff's views.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137596
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10290185
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	248
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Headteacher	Tuesday Rhodes
Website	www.inclusion.sheffield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Sheffield Inclusion Centre is a pupil referral unit providing education for up to 300 pupils aged between five and 16. Some pupils are dual registered. This means that they are on the roll of two schools: the commissioning school and The Sheffield Inclusion Centre.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils that the school provides for has grown considerably. The school operates across nine main sites in Sheffield. It also runs four prevention centres (provision for pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion) across the city.
- Pupils join the school throughout the academic year.
- There is a high proportion of pupils with SEND. Many have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school currently makes use of four unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors visited six of the school's sites and one prevention centre.
- An inspector held a discussion, by telephone, with one alternative provider.
- Inspectors held several meetings with the headteacher and other senior staff during the course of this inspection.
- Inspectors also met with several groups of teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the management committee, the body responsible for governance of the school, and two representatives from Sheffield local authority.
- An inspector spoke with a representative from one commissioning school.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: food technology, mathematics, reading and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons alongside school leaders, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in a small number of other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning and about their views on behaviour and the wider experiences they receive at school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the duration of the inspection.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of pre-appointment checks, looked at safeguarding documentation, spoke with staff, pupils, governors and trustees, and spoke with representatives from Sheffield local authority, commissioning schools and alternative providers.
- Inspectors reviewed the parental responses received through the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. An inspector held discussions with a small number of parents.
- Inspectors also considered the responses received through Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Inspectors took account of the school's analysis of its own surveys of parents' and pupils' opinions.

Inspection team

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