

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Uffculme School

Yew Tree Road, Birmingham B13 8QG

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

Uffculme School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at Uffculme School. They are happy, feel safe and are eager to learn. The curriculum is designed to prepare pupils for life beyond the school. Many recent changes have improved the educational provision for pupils here. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Positive and strong relationships lie at the heart of the school's work. Parents and carers, staff and pupils work well together. Staff have a secure understanding about the barriers to learning for pupils with autism spectrum condition. The school understands how behaviours are a form of communication. Staff have effective skills and knowledge to support the specific needs of pupils. Subsequently, pupils behave well in lessons, at breaktimes and across the school day.

Pupils have a range of meaningful enrichment activities. These also support pupils' interests and talents, such as professional football mentorship and music lessons. Pupils have many opportunities to experience the wider world and their local community. For example, students in the sixth form learn how to prepare shopping lists, handle money and how to interact with employees at their local shop. Consequently, the school's mission of, 'for all young people at Uffculme to lead meaningful and enjoyable lives' is realised.

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

There have been many positive and exciting changes to the school's curriculum, starting in the early years. This has improved the quality of education that pupils experience. The school has also introduced effective assessment systems. These help staff to know what pupils know and remember from their learning across curriculum areas. Staff use this

information well, alongside each pupil's education, health and care plan. This approach helps staff to build a picture about each individual pupil's needs and how to best meet them.

The curriculum is ambitious and has been carefully designed to support the needs of pupils. Pupils learn within the most appropriate curriculum pathway for them. This helps them to learn alongside other pupils with similar needs. The knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils to learn are identified and clearly build on pupils' prior learning in most subject areas. Staff teach pupils the curriculum in a clear, logical order. Pupils' misconceptions are addressed effectively most of the time. Pupils access additional, well-tailored resources to support their learning, such as visual aids. The school considers carefully how to support pupils' communication and interaction needs. It also places much emphasis in its curriculum on developing pupils' independence, life skills and preparation for adulthood. Consequently, pupils achieve a range of accreditations and qualifications.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Pupils at the early stages of reading are identified quickly and support is put in place. Pupils are taught how to recognise and respond to sounds, such as through rhythm and rhyme. A structured phonics programme is in place in the primary school. Most staff deliver this well, most of the time. However, in the secondary school, pupils are taught to read using a different approach. As pupils move between the two settings, they experience a disjointed approach to learning how to read. This slows down learning for some pupils.

Pupils attend school regularly. They enjoy their time in school and are eager to come every day. Children in the early years know their routines well. They are settled and respond positively to their learning. Pupils behave well across the school. At breaktimes, there are a range of activities for pupils to engage in. Staff and pupils interact positively and respectfully with each other. They initiate play and games together. On some occasions, if pupils become highly anxious, staff quickly intervene and support them. This helps to keep all pupils safe. However, the school does not have a sharp enough focus on checking and analysing when some of these incidences have occurred. This means that, sometimes it does not have an accurate view of how well it is supporting pupils' behaviour.

The curriculum to support pupil's personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils have a personalised approach to what pupils need to be successful citizens. Pupils are taught how to ask for help, such as when to use national telephone helplines. Pupils know about online safety. They learn about positive relationships. Pupils understand how people are different and should be treated equally. Pupils are taught how to use kitchen appliances for independent living. They are taught about self-care and hygiene. The school has an appropriately planned offer in place for careers education, information, advice and guidance. These experiences help prepare pupils well for their future lives.

The vast majority of parents are highly positive about their children's experiences at the school. They were eager to share how changes to the curriculum are having a positive impact on their child. Staff are supportive of the school's work. Changes and new initiatives which have led to increases in staff workload are being addressed effectively.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to governance. The governors know the school well. They prioritise professional development for themselves and for all staff. They make decisions in the best interests of pupils at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not ensure that its approach to teaching reading in the secondary phase builds carefully on its approach in the primary phase. This means that as pupils move between the two key stages, they experience a disjointed approach to learning how to read. For some pupils, this slows down their learning. The school should revise its phonics programme, so that pupils can build on their prior knowledge as they move between key stages.
- On occasion, the school does not know how well its approaches to supporting pupils' behaviour are working. This means that, sometimes, the school is unclear how it can improve the quality of its work. The school should ensure that it knows the impact of its support for pupils' behaviour, so that it can find more clearly what further improvements it will make..

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	103605
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343751
Type of school	All-through Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	301
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of the governing body	Teresa Cutler
Headteacher	Charlotte Stubbs
Website	www.uffculme.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection there have been several changes to the leadership team. All of the governing board, including the chair of governors are new since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and two special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) are new to post.
- Uffculme School is a specialist provider for pupils with autism spectrum condition as their primary area of need. Pupils also have associated needs, such as speech, language, communication and interaction, complex and sensory needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is based around three different sites that are closely located: early years and primary share a site, while secondary and the sixth form provision occupy further sites.

- 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 does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, SENCOs, the chair of governors, governors, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked with parents. Inspectors also talked informally with staff, including transport assistants and drivers.
- The lead inspector met with a local authority representative and an external governor improvement adviser.
- Inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke with teachers.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of individual education plans for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, formally and informally, about their learning and experiences at school.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also looked at responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents and SEND records.

Inspection team

Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Orgill	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Wells	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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