

Uffculme School

Yew Tree Road, Birmingham, B13 8QG

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since September 2018 school leaders have worked hard to address the weaknesses in the quality of education at the school which had developed over time. They have developed many effective strategies to ensure that all children and pupils have access to a provision that meets their needs.
- Personal development has a very high profile in the school with all pupils provided with opportunities to develop themselves as individuals and members of society.
- The conduct and behaviour of the pupils at the school is exceptional. As a result of support provided by highly effective staff pupils learn to manage their own emotions, feelings and develop strong interaction skills.
- As a result of strong provision that meets the academic needs of pupils, they make good progress in a range of areas.
- Children make an exceptionally strong start to their education in early years, as a result of members of staff who have a strong understanding of the needs and abilities of the children.
- As a result of strong leadership in post -16, pupils are provided with opportunities to make
- Families are positive about the school and believe that their children are happy and feel safe at the school.
- Staff feel well supported by leaders and professional development is used effectively to make sure they have the appropriate skills to meet the needs of pupils.
- Pupils are very positive about the school and feel that staff help them to understand their own needs more so they can be better learners.
- Despite good leadership and management at school level governance is relatively weak. Governors do not fully understand their strategic role in school improvement.
- The curriculum does not ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress, because it has not yet been carefully tailored to meet pupils' individual educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and build on prior learning.
- Systems to support pupils to develop their understanding of what they are learning and why are underdeveloped.

good progress and to access the world around them.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of governance so that all governors:
 - have an effective understanding of their strategic role to hold leaders to account for school improvement and the quality of provision at the school
 - establish clear processes for monitoring the quality of leaders' judgements about the effectiveness of the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum effectively meets the needs of pupils' individual additional needs so that they can make the greatest progress possible
 - ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of what knowledge and skills they are learning and why they are learning it.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school's leadership team, have worked hard to address the weaknesses in provision that have developed since the January 2014 inspection. They have carefully considered the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have implemented a plan which has underpinned significant improvements in a number of areas. This strong team is having a powerful impact on improving the effectiveness of the school's provision.
- Leaders have established a culture at the school where every individual pupil is celebrated and encouraged to achieve.
- Middle leaders provide effective leadership in pastoral, curriculum and organisation of learning opportunities. As a result, the curriculum, and learning continues to develop to meet a broader range of SEND at the school. Senior leaders have demonstrated a very clear vision for development at this level, by ensuring that all middle leaders have access to effective professional development.
- All leaders demonstrate high expectations for the school. This is demonstrated through their positive presence across the school and the way that they help colleagues to develop their practice and support for pupils.
- The vision for provision is well communicated across the school. All members of staff know what the areas of strength for the school are and what leaders are doing to improve the quality of the provision. For example, when inspectors meet with staff, they all were clear about the current work on meeting a wider range of needs.
- Pupils have access to a broad range of opportunities that are constantly being enhanced. For example, a recent development of the forest school provision has enabled pupils to develop problem-solving and creative thinking skills. As a result of this, and other developments, pupils are developing stronger life skills.
- Leaders and teachers use assessment information well to make sure that provision for individual pupils constantly evolves so that the best outcomes are achieved. Whilst currently 'fit for purpose' leaders have identified that they need to complete more work on developing the assessment systems in the school. They work is to be completed alongside the development of the new curriculum.
- Leaders have identified and implemented effective systems for understanding and managing behaviour. Class teams carefully consider the reasons for any unsuitable behaviour. As a result of this, the response to behaviour is tailored to the individual pupil, and in turn reduces the incidence of any inappropriate behaviours. This partnership, not only supports the pupil, but also develops the skill set of all staff to meet behavioural needs.
- Leaders have made strong use of a range of different buildings to create effective provisions for meeting the needs of pupils. Whilst based on three different sites, leaders have ensured that these three departments work well together, sharing skills, monitoring and strategies

- Leaders have established an effective communication and sensory integration provision across the school. For example, in the primary department, communication systems are well used throughout the day to make sure that children can communicate well with other members of the community. In the secondary department, the development around meeting sensory needs mean that pupils are developing skills to regulate their own sensory and behavioural needs. Leaders have used external services and training to make sure these areas continue to be developed well across the school.
- Additional government funding such as primary physical education (PE) and sports premium, year 7 catch up premium and pupil premium are used to have positive impact on the progress of pupils at the school. For example, the PE and sports premium has been used effectively to develop the range of resources and environments for physical development in the primary department. As a result of the use of pupil premium, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is in line with other pupils at the school.
- Work with parents and carers continues to have a high profile at the school. A series of workshops have brought increasing numbers of parents into school to learn about different topics such as sleeping, sensory matters and developing communication. While there is a small minority of parents feel that communication between school and home is not strong enough, the vast majority feel that they are provided with sufficient information about how well their child is doing in school. An overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school to other parents.
- Leaders use external challenge appropriately to ensure that the school continues to move forwards. This support, provided by the local authority, challenges leaders to consider how they can best develop aspects of the provision such as the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and monitoring processes. External training opportunities are carefully considered to further the current work of the school. Staff who attend this training ensure that this information is shared with the wider community, so all staff and pupils benefit.
- The development of the curriculum is a priority for the school to meet a wider range of SEND. Over the last few years the range of SEND that Uffculme caters for has widened considerably and leaders have identified that the current curriculum could be enhanced further to meet this broader range.

Governance of the school

- Governance is relatively weak.
- As a result of several changes to the governing body over the last few years, the number of governors who have the necessary skills and experience to fulfil the role is low. As a result, there is a confusion about the strategic role of governor and what they need to do to ensure that leaders are held to account for the quality of education at the school.
- Processes for monitoring the quality of leaders' judgements are inconsistent and too reliant on external services. When governors visit the school, the visits are not recorded and do not contribute well enough to developing the understanding of the

wider governing body. Minutes from meetings do not always reflect the levels of communication, challenge and support necessary to deepen their understanding.

- While governors have a broad understanding of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures they cannot be sure that policy is reflected in practice.
- There are currently a number of vacancies on the governing body. Leaders and remaining governors are working hard to ensure that gaps are filled as soon as possible.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Those with responsibility for safeguarding are effectively deployed to the different sites of the school provision. This means that any concerns can be raised and dealt with quickly.
- Safeguarding plays a central role in the provision at the school. Systems are precise and ensure that all concerns are well reported. Those responsible for safeguarding have ensured that all members of the community can report concerns effectively. The school is currently transitioning to a new online system for reporting concerns, and while this is happening concerns can still be reported on paper based systems.
- Staff are confident that they can take any concerns to designated safeguarding leads and that these concerns will be dealt with. Staff also know that they could challenge those leaders at any time if they felt that the right actions had not been taken. They are also fully aware of system to further raise concerns with local safeguarding services should they need to.
- Safeguarding training is appropriate and recorded well. As a result, all members of staff interviewed were able to articulate a detailed understanding of current safeguarding legislation and what this means in schools. This knowledge is frequently tested by those with responsibility for safeguarding.
- All staff have a good knowledge of current national and local issues such as radicalisation and extremism, misuse of the internet, peer on peer abuse, and child sexual exploitation and how these issues could have an effect on pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching enables pupils to make good progress, both academically and personally. In the majority of cases, teachers have high expectations of what all their pupils can achieve. Pupils show excellent attitudes in class, enjoy learning and are motivated to do their best.
- Teachers' careful planning ensures that teaching often meets pupils' academic needs. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and are skilled at translating this to make it accessible and relevant to their pupils. Pupils are pushed to achieve through the challenge built into all lessons.
- Teacher are working hard to ensure that the provision for teaching, learning and assessment effectively meets the growing range of SEND in the school. They have developed a greater range of teaching strategies to meet communication, sensory and

behavioural needs. For example, in secondary, students are able to accurately identify when they need time away from the classroom to regulate their emotions to learning. These pupils are proficient in returning to learning quickly.

- The quality of work in books demonstrates that pupils usually make good progress. Pupils usually have access to work that ensures that the necessary progress can be made. Leaders have identified that further work is needed to ensure that all staff use the marking policy of the school. This will in turn develop pupils' ability to understand how successful they have been in their learning and what they need to do to improve.
- The quality of teaching and learning for the most able pupils has improved greatly over this year. As a result of increased expectations, these pupils are now making greater progress over time. Leaders and teachers are able now to identify more precise targets for future progress.
- A particular strength of the school is the teaching of science. In one lesson observed inspectors were able to see secondary pupils using a range of scientific equipment such as Bunsen burners and chemicals to extract the colour from leaves. As a result of the range of scientific activities, pupils are developing keen scientific enquiry skills and then relating this to real life.
- Teaching assistants work hard to support pupils' learning. They receive effective training and professional development. This ensures that they have the necessary skills to help pupils to progress.
- Leaders have established several strategies to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Lesson observations, reviews of progress data, work trawls and detailed discussions with staff inform key judgements about how effective provision is. Leaders then use this information to inform key developments not only for the provision in class, but also whole school developments. Leaders take decisive action when the quality of teaching is not effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate the most positive attitude to learning and are keen to engage with learning.
- Pupils are very positive about the school and feel that all staff want to help them understand their own needs. For example, one pupil shared with inspectors that 'the teachers understand what you are going through and they listen when you are upset and want to keep you safe'.
- A positive emphasis is placed on supporting pupils' awareness of rights and respect. The school has worked hard to develop an environment where pupils can feel safe and respected, whilst nurturing their talents. The 'Rights Respecting Schools' Bronze award was recently achieved.
- The development of wider opportunities for pupils is embedded across the school. Charitable fund raising is a regular occurrence such as days to support Children in Need. Pupils in the secondary department organise Christmas and spring fairs, where

they present craft stalls, music workshops and food stalls for the whole of the school, including primary pupils and parents.

- Bullying is rare, and pupils know what to do if they feel that someone is bullying them. They are confident that the staff would help them and would 'sort it'. Pupils' understanding of bullying is developing well. They are able to explain the different forms that bullying can take and the potential reasons for it. Some pupils are developing a strong understanding of those characteristics that are protected by law.
- The ability of the pupils to develop healthy lifestyles is fundamental across the school. Not only does the range of food provided at lunchtimes designed to encourage healthy choices, but pupils are encouraged to make positive choices in their social and leisure interests. One powerful way the school achieves this is through talents, abilities and gifts (TAG) sessions, where pupils identify leisure options that they are passionate about. They will then, supported by staff, offer these options to other pupils to develop their interests as well.
- Assemblies and lessons support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They reflect the strong caring ethos of the school. The school provides a range of extra-curricular opportunities including residential visits and lunchtime clubs. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their learning is reinforced by related educational visits.
- Partnership with parents is well-nurtured across the school. As a result of this parents are positive about the school and the provision that it offers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Governors and leaders have created a positive and welcoming atmosphere across the school. Pupils interact well together and the school is very inclusive, with staff and pupils keen to make everyone feel involved and valued. Pupils show respect for others and are keen to impress their teachers.
- Pupils have a thoughtful and caring relationship with other pupils. In most cases they listen to what other pupils say and value their contributions. For example, when inspectors met with the school council, pupils were keen to ensure that others' views of differences were listened to and appreciated. As a result of this pupils feel valued not only from staff, but also from peers.
- Leaders have successfully developed this area to ensure that behaviour is well understood so that the most effective strategies can be implemented. They use a range of precise strategies to understand why the behaviour might happen, so the best approach can be identified. One particular strategy is the use of well-being surgeries, where pupils can be referred by staff, or refer themselves. These groups provide opportunities for pupils to talk with highly skilled staff about their feelings and emotions. These conversations will then lead to a series of actions that will be shared with the pupils, staff and families.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils work hard to develop their skills, often showing great resilience. Those who find it difficult to settle and to concentrate make good progress, as a result of flexible and bespoke planning that identifies barriers to learning quickly.

- Leaders use of fixed term exclusions is rare, used for only short periods of time, and declining over time.
- The use of physical intervention is well managed and staff are well trained in de-escalation strategies. As a result, challenging behaviour is managed quickly, allowing for pupils to return to learning. Incidents are well recorded, analysed and learned from.
- Pupils' attendance, is above average, and improving. Highly responsive staff and effective procedures mean that unexplained absence is rare and responded to quickly. Staff are proactive in working with parents to strengthen this further and use a variety of different strategies to encourage high levels of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across the school, pupils of all ages and who have different needs are making good progress. There is no different in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils who are looked after make good progress. The majority of the most able pupils make good progress in developing their reading and writing skills over time.
- More recently, and in response to the broader range of SEND the school now caters for, leaders have prioritised the meeting of communication, behaviour and sensory needs. As a result of this focus more pupils are making greater progress in a range of different areas. This remains a priority for the school.
- Leaders and teachers demand that expectations are high and that the aspirations for all pupils are checked to ensure they are the best possible outcomes. As a result of this the majority of pupils make at least good progress.
- The youngest pupils are making strong progress with developing very relevant skills. This is evident in early years and key stage 1. Pupils learn early communication, English and mathematics skills well.
- Pupils make good progress in developing early reading skills. Many of the children score well on the year 1 phonics screening. This is due to the strong emphasis placed on developing phonic skills in the early years.
- Across the school writing is taught well and pupils have opportunities to write at length about a range of curriculum subjects.
- Progress since September 2018 for the majority of pupils has improved after a dip and is good or better across the curriculum. This is due to the effort and commitment of leaders and staff to raise standards by increasing expectations about what can be achieved.
- Transitions to the next stages in learning is a key area for development identified by the school. Leaders have designed a system to ensure that detailed knowledge not only informed the planning for next steps but influences the quality of provision when the pupils get there. As a result of this pupils should avoid the potential dips in progress that can happen after transitions.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Those with responsibility for early years have a precise understanding of the effectiveness of the provision. They keep detailed records and ensure that changes are made to the provision in order to ensure that children, at the very earliest stages, have their needs met well. For example, special groups are provided throughout the day that provide additional support to those pupils who find large group session difficult.
- Children come into the school with very low levels of ability. . All children are assessed within the first 8 weeks of starting at the school, including their ability to communicate and engage with learning. This means that the provision is effective in making best use of time at the earliest stages of learning.
- Children progress well and start to develop early communication quickly. When needed, communication systems for those who are yet to use words are identified quickly and implemented well.
- Teachers have a very clear understanding about where the children are in terms of their development. Systems are embedded to ensure that this understanding is regularly updated.
- Learning journals are well maintained and used effectively to engage with parents. Parents are encouraged to respond to the progress that children are making in school. In many cases, parents then successfully promote further progress at home. This communication is ensuring that partnerships are being developed at the earliest stages of children's education.
- The early years' environment has been carefully considered and constructed to meet the needs of the children within the provision. Whilst providing a range of resources for learning that are easily accessible, the environment is based on systems to meet the needs of the children. For example, the use work work stations ensure that children can focus on interactions with staff and activities, rather than being distracted easily. As a result of this children are developing strong attention skills early in their education.
- Those with responsibility for early years ensure that all members of staff have a strong understanding of the needs of the children. Supervision of children is very strong, while still ensuring that children have the opportunities to explore and take risks.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met in the early years'.
- Detailed transitions plans mean that children are well prepared for moving into the next stage in school. Early years staff work well with staff in later stages in the school to make sure children progress to more challenging learning quickly.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- In line with the leadership of the rest of the school, leadership of the sixth form is good. Leaders, within this provision are committed to making sure that all students have access to a provision that supports their access to the world around them. Staff give careful consideration to preparing the students for the next stages of their education, employment and training.

- The provision is based within the local community. This demonstrates leaders' ability to ensure that these students are part of, and have access to that community on a daily basis. For example, inspectors were able to observe two students visiting a café as part of their enterprise coursework.
- The curriculum has been changed to meet the varying needs of students. Students follow their own tailored pathways based upon their needs, interests and aspirations, with qualifications drawn from the areas of life skills, employability and further education. All pathways include a strong element of personal, social, health and citizenship education designed to support students in their life after school. All sixth-form students complete their courses.
- English and mathematics skills are developed appropriately through the functional curriculum, and where possible applied to real life situations in the community.
- Progress over time is good. It is very accurately tracked against the assessment criteria for externally verified courses. Where students are struggling, interventions are put in place or alternative pathways are considered. Students leave school with a range of qualifications which are appropriate to their needs and interests and which support their next stages of learning.
- Work- related learning opportunities has been, and continues to be an area for development for the sixth form. This reflects the difficulties leaders have in securing work experience placements in the local community for these students.
- Teaching, learning and assessment supports and challenges students to make good progress. Independence is developed and good use of questioning helps students develop their skills and understanding. Positive relationships, including all staff working productively together also help students to achieve well.
- Students, alongside their parents, receive good advice and guidance about selecting meaningful destinations post-school. Staff make sure that opportunities after Uffculme are well suited to students' needs and skillfully support students to make the transition. The school keeps careful records of students' success in their placements post-school.

School details

Unique reference number	103605
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10091034

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Watts
Headteacher	Charlotte Stubbs
Telephone number	01214649634
Website	www.uffculme.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@uffculme.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2018

Information about this school

- Uffculme is a school that caters for pupils who have a wide range of disabilities and needs. The majority of pupils are those with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). However, and more recently, a greater number have a range of special needs, in addition to ASD such as speech and language difficulties, sensory and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British Background.
- Many of the pupils do not live in the immediate locality of the school and a large number of pupils are transported to and from school by minibuses.

- Approximately 46% of pupils are disadvantaged pupils. The school has a number of children looked after on roll. Almost three quarters of pupils are boys.
- Pupils enter the school at different points in their school career, sometimes as late as year 9.
- The school is based around three different sites that are closely located: Early years and primary share a site, whilst secondary and the sixth form provision occupy their own sites.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2018.
- The school receives school improvement support, commissioned by the local authority, from an external school improvement partner.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons, some of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work in all year groups to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors considered parents' opinions through scrutinising 57 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 47 free-text responses. Inspectors were able to talk with a small number of parents at the start of the day when they brought their children to school. They also took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and around the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break time and lunchtime, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy and assistant head teachers, middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, designated safeguarding leads, members of the administration team, and members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also spoke to representatives from the local education partnership.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including: the schools' plan for improvement; school self-evaluation; reports from external reviews of provision; the most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils; the most recent data relating to the attendance of pupils; and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- The inspectors considered the wide range and quality of information provided on the school website.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda McGill	Ofsted Inspector
Marie Thomas	Ofsted Inspector

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