

# Uffculme School

Queensbridge Road, Birmingham, B13 8QB

**Inspection dates** 22–23 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and leadership team have created a school in which all staff have a deep understanding of every pupil, allowing them to meet individual needs very effectively.
- Teaching across the school is outstanding. This is due to the school's strong commitment towards professional development, the innovative ways that staff help pupils and the continually expanding range of subjects taught.
- The development of the pupils' language and communication skills are central to the school and this allows pupils to make excellent progress.
- From very low starting points, all groups of pupils regardless of their backgrounds make outstanding progress.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding due to the excellent teaching and highly individual manner in which all pupils are taught.
- Links with parents are highly effective and spearheaded by the weekly coffee morning/training which takes place. These events are very well attended and parents feel they are a crucial line of communication.
- Literacy and mathematical skills are taught across a wide range of subjects as well as individually and this results in pupils making excellent progress.
- Behaviour and safety are exemplary. Pupils quickly develop confidence, self-esteem and highly positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy both in and outside of school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Relationships are excellent and staff have high aspirations for all pupils.
- The governing body has a wide range of personal and professional skills that they bring to the school. These are used highly effectively to make sure governors have a clear and accurate view of the school, and so challenge and support the leadership team fully.
- Leadership and management are outstanding as leaders have both maintained and improved upon the high standards seen in the previous inspection. Leaders and managers at all levels have a single vision for improvement, as seen in their expansion programme to provide greater opportunities for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 16 lessons and 10 of these were carried out jointly with the headteacher and a member of the senior leadership team.
- Work in classrooms and around the school was reviewed and several pupils were heard reading.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils, talked to members of the senior and middle leadership teams, specialist language and communication staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documentation regarding safeguarding and attendance, school development and evaluation, lesson planning, teaching over time, information regarding pupils' progress and subject developments were all scrutinised by the inspection team.
- The team took account of the 15 responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, a letter sent in by a parent and a recent parental survey carried out by the school.

## Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- All pupils have statements of special educational needs for autistic spectrum disorders and an increasing number of pupils are joining the school with further multi-complex needs.
- There are far more boys in the school than girls.
- Pupils are taught in 16 mixed-age classes within their key stages.
- Almost half the pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides extra funding to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from other groups, such as those being looked after, which is much higher than average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well above average.
- Although the school is registered for the age range of 3-19 years the school currently only has pupils up to Year 11. However, the school has recently acquired new premises and plans to expand their age range further in the near future.
- The school has, however, begun to suffer from a number of pupils entering and leaving the school at times other than those expected. This has had the effect of varying the results seen in national school statistics, which is further exacerbated by small year group numbers.
- The school has Quality Mark Awards for both its primary and secondary provision.
- The school has developed several leading tracking and monitoring systems, which are used by a wide range of similar schools in England and Wales.

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

- Widen the range of subjects and qualifications available to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 in order to take account of pupils' rising ability levels.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Due to outstanding teaching, achievement is consistently good or better in all classes. Although the 2013 national information on assessment tests showed some groups were not progressing as well as they might, this information was affected by small numbers and pupils entering and leaving the school at times other than those expected. School information, however, shows that all groups of pupils are progressing equally well over time.
- In lessons, language and communication skills are a central feature and the rates of progress are outstanding, due to the excellent practice of the specialists in school and their partnerships with all staff to make sure each pupil's needs are fully met. Where pupils are capable of reading they make at least good progress from year to year.
- As pupils progress through the school and their communication skills develop, given their learning difficulties, they acquire excellent subject knowledge and language. This was clearly shown in a Year 7 English lesson where pupils were writing a report. During discussions, they confidently described the various subject terms they were using, the skills they required to complete the task as well as positively showing their enjoyment of learning.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make outstanding progress, as seen in one lesson where they were learning about the early stages of reading and mark making. A wide range of activities were rotated to maintain concentration on the main teaching theme. Staff constantly chatted to and encouraged both verbal and sign/symbolic forms of communication, as well as showing how to form and recognise letter shapes.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make progress in line with that of their peers in school. Many of these pupils speak English as an additional language as well as having more complex learning needs. However, school information on their progress, which has been validated by the local authority and external reviews by partnership schools, shows that by Year 6 they are within half a term of their peers and the gaps in attainment are closing rapidly.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language also make excellent progress. As a result of the work the school does to support their families, many of these pupils achieve better than their peers in schools.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to provide additional support and resources for those pupils who have not as yet reached the same levels as their peers in school.
- However, it is the progress the pupils make in their personal, social and moral development, which is extraordinary in Uffculme School. Given their particular learning needs, pupils move through the school developing from individuals who find it extremely difficult to be with others, yet alone play and/or communicate with each other, to being highly sociable, polite and extremely well behaved individuals with a very strong sense of right and wrong.
- Pupils enjoy the learning they gain from the wide range of subjects taught, but especially enjoy the physical education they receive and discussions with them clearly show that they relate this to their own healthy living and keeping fit.
- English and mathematics skills are taught as both single subjects and across other subject areas, which provided the pupils with an excellent range of opportunities to practise their skills. As

teachers also provide activities as close to real-life situations as possible, this not only further enhances pupils enjoyment of learning, but provides meaning and so helps to lead to the excellent progress pupils make in these subjects.

- In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils continue to make at least good and for some outstanding progress. More-able pupils are encouraged to take GCSE examinations in a widening range of subjects. The school has not yet fully taken into account the fact that pupils are entering these key stages with increasingly higher achievement in order to expand the range of subjects available and to provide greater opportunities for qualifications.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **is outstanding**

- The consistently good and outstanding teaching across the school promotes an excellent attitude to learning in all pupils. When linked to the excellent relationships the teachers and other adults who support learning have developed with the pupils, this combination has brought about a real 'I can do' attitude in the pupils.
- Teachers provide a wide range of stimulating activities which, due to high staff ratios to pupils, are very well matched to the needs and abilities of each individual pupil.
- Excellent routines both in the classrooms and around the school mean little learning time is lost as pupils move from one activity to the next.
- Wall displays both praise pupils' achievements as well as providing excellent reinforcement for learning, especially in terms of sign/symbol communication skills, as these are in every classroom.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge means that pupils are always exposed to the correct subject language and explanation of meanings. This results in pupils acquiring strong subject knowledge as they move through the school. For example, in a Year3/4 mathematics lesson pupils were learning basic subtraction skills, but all the adults used the correct mathematical terms, took time to explain them where pupils were unclear and had high expectations that pupils should in turn use these terms themselves, which they did very well.
- Teachers have very strong partnerships with the school's language and communication specialists and this has resulted in the creation and use of some high calibre monitoring and tracking systems, which are very specific to pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. These in turn mean that teachers have highly accurate information on which to base pupils' future learning.
- The national 'Teachers' Standards' are being met and teachers continually improve on their skills through regular training, which in turn helps to provide wider learning opportunities for the pupils.
- Teachers and the other adults who support learning regularly and effectively use a wide range of signs and symbols as well as verbal communication to make sure that all pupils fully understand their work and the tasks set.
- Teachers use a wide range of visits, residential trips and visitors to enhance learning further and to make it relevant to the lives of the pupils. In Key Stages 3 and 4 there is an increasing amount of work and college experiences provided to make sure that pupils are prepared for their next phase of life.

- Parents and pupils rightly say that teaching is excellent and provides a solid foundation to the lives of the pupils. As one parent commented, 'I cannot express enough the effect Uffculme School has had on both my child and the lives of our family. They have given confidence and self-esteem to my child and our family and the skills to help them and to cope with their difficulties.'

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Although many pupils enter the school with very low attainment and highly complex needs, they very quickly settle into the excellent routines of the school. Their behaviour and any other problems are managed extremely well and with excellent care and personal consideration.
- Pupils quickly learn what is acceptable and what is not and are always encouraged and provided with opportunities to socialise with others. This results in pupils quickly overcoming problems, being more responsive and aware of the needs of others and being able to share, work and play together.
- Behaviour in classrooms is exemplary, as pupils are so eager to learn. Where problems do arise they are generally very minor and dealt with very quickly, so as not to detract from the pupils' learning and/or that of others.
- In the playground and dining areas the pupils are quiet, respectful and considerate and yet sociable and eager to be with their peers, which is a testament to the excellent work of the staff in building these relationships.
- Staff are well trained to deal with any situations which may arise but school logs, which are well kept, record no major incidents for some time, no exclusions for several years and no racial incidents.
- Parents, pupils and staff all rightly feel that behaviour is excellent across the whole school.
- Older pupils take a real pride in their role in school and are currently involved in supporting the senior leadership team in the development of the new range of subjects to be taught in the school.
- Attendance is average and improving and pupils attend their lessons punctually and settle into learning very quickly in all key stages.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding as all pupils are taught about how to be safe outside of school from a very early stage. As they gain further language and communication skills they are given broader guidance on healthy lifestyles, drugs usage, the various forms of bullying and e-safety and by the time they reach Year 6 these elements are a real strength of the school. The school environment is a safe and secure place to be and all pupils spoken to state they felt very safe and their parents agree with this point of view. The grounds and buildings are in good repair and secured following pupils' arrival in the morning.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- Leadership and management are outstanding because leaders have not only maintained the developments seen in the previous inspection, but have continued to develop the school further

despite the increasingly more complex needs of pupils entering the school.

- The checking of teaching by leaders at all levels is excellent and is closely linked to teachers' performance and pay progression. However, a rigorous approach to developing all staff further is a key reason for continued good and outstanding achievement by the pupils.
- All leaders and managers have a very clear and accurate view of the school through careful tracking and monitoring of all aspects and especially pupil progress.
- The primary schools sports funding is effectively used to provide further training to staff on how to teach a range of sports. This has resulted in pupils being fully engaged in their physical education lessons.
- The school has developed systems and procedures, which are being used nationally by a number of special schools, as well as increasing support to mainstream and special school teachers.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well managed and a tight monitoring of teaching has resulted in consistently outstanding progress for children. Systems for monitoring and recording all aspects of children's progress are excellent and provide teachers with a solid base on which to plan future learning.
- The leadership and management of Key Stages 3 and 4 are also excellent and very active, which is shown in their initiative of tracking all pupils across the school to check rates of progress in each area. This includes looking at how pupils prefer to learn and anything that may cause issues. They have begun using this information to prepare for the future but this has not yet resulted in an expansion of GCSE examinations and subject range.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional as the school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures, religions and the diverse society in which they live. Alongside this, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to play and work with each other and so develop their social skills.
- Pupil-premium funding is used effectively to provide one-to-one support for some pupils, different resources to match individual needs and to make sure that pupils can access the whole life of the school. This also shows the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- The school has strong links with the local authority, which provides a light-touch approach. Links with its partnership schools foster excellent help with checking its work. This is especially so in its preparation for the new primary curriculum and development of the 14-19 provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors consistently use further training to support their wealth of personal expertise to make sure they can carry out their duties to the highest possible levels. They rigorously monitor all aspects of the school and spend a great deal of time observing the various aspects of its work. Governors have an excellent understanding of data and the quality of teaching and they monitor performance management for all staff and make sure that the quality of their work is related to their pay and professional development. Financial aspects are well managed by the governing body and they particularly check the spending of pupil-premium funding, the primary sports funding and Year 7 catch-up funding. All safeguarding aspects meet current requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103605
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	440415

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	134
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Liz Garnham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alex Macdonald
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 5250
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