School report

Inspection of The Primrose Centre

Throne Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands B65 9JP

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders want the school to be a 'revolving door that helps and supports pupils back into mainstream or specialist provision'. The high number of pupils who successfully transfer back into their school or move on to a specialist setting is proof that leaders achieve this goal.

When pupils join the school, many have struggled in their previous setting. Pupils are often switched off from learning. Leaders and staff work tirelessly and successfully to get pupils to a point where they engage in their learning. A strong sense of pastoral care underpins the curriculum and all aspects of school life. Pupils appreciate this. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their much-improved levels of attendance since joining The Primrose Centre.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of behaviour. They maintain clear and consistent routines, which support pupils to improve their behaviour. Leaders and staff know the pupils inside and out. As a result, they nip any potential issues in the bud. Staff take bullying seriously and deal with any issues quickly.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They comment about the transformation in their children's behaviour and attitudes to learning.

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

Leaders have put together a carefully planned transition process when new pupils join the school. This helps pupils to settle quickly and supports the return to their original setting at the end of the placement. Leaders gain an accurate understanding of pupils' starting points when they join the school. As a result, they know what pupils can do well and where they need extra help.

Leaders have carefully considered the design of the curriculum. The curriculum maps out the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn over time. It provides sufficient guidance for teachers, so they know what to teach and when to teach it. However, leaders have built in flexibility so that staff can adapt their teaching to respond to the individual needs of pupils in their class.

In most instances, teachers and teaching assistants explain new learning in a step-by-step manner. They use questioning well to explore pupils' understanding and encourage discussion. Resources are well selected to support pupils' learning. However, there are some inconsistencies in relation to how well staff deliver the curriculum, and pupils' misconceptions are not always picked up. Subject leaders have had limited opportunities to make checks on how their subject area is taught and the impact this is having on pupils' learning. As a result, they have not picked up on these inconsistencies.

Reading has a high priority in the school. When pupils join the school, staff identify any gaps in their phonics knowledge straight away. Staff address these gaps through whole-class teaching or focused one-to-one work. Pupils use their phonics skills confidently to break down unknown words when reading books. Staff work creatively to develop a love of reading because many pupils do not enjoy reading.

When some pupils join the school, they have undiagnosed and unmet special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify these quickly and put measures into place so that pupils can access their learning. They share this information with the school that pupils return to. This supports pupils' transition at the end of the placement

The curriculum is built on a foundation of nurture and care. Timetabled lessons, enrichment activities, outdoor learning and the level of care shown by staff support pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Specialist teaching in music, dance and gymnastics enriches pupils' learning experiences. Whether it is making their own music or doing cartwheels, pupils throw themselves into the range of activities. Pupils really enjoy the trips that are on offer, including visits to local tourist attractions and a nearby adventure park.

Leaders and staff work well as a team and support each other. Leaders are considerate of staff's well-being and make sure that workload is manageable. A teaching assistant's comment summed it up, 'Leaders look out for us all the time.' Staff enjoy working in the school and are proud to wear the Primrose badge. They find it rewarding to see the positive changes that they make to pupils' lives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that all staff are well trained to safeguard pupils. Training includes safeguarding updates, as well as a focus on specific issues, such as the 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, staff are alert to any signs of potential or actual abuse. They know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare and act accordingly. Leaders work well with other agencies to secure additional help for pupils and their families if required. Pupils feel safe because the staff care for them. In addition, parents have confidence in the school staff to keep their children safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not prioritised making checks on how the curriculum is delivered. As a result, they are unclear which parts of the curriculum are taught as intended and which parts may need to improve. Leaders should make checks on how the curriculum is delivered in all subjects to improve the impact on pupils' learning.

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' 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

Unique reference number	135253
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10240137
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Hipkiss
Headteacher	Kuldip Berdesha
Website	www.primrose.sandwell.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 October 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a short-stay pupil referral unit for permanently excluded pupils and pupils at risk of exclusion. The school offers specialist support for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school's body of governance is known as the management committee.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. He met with three members of the management committee, including the chair. The lead

inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

- The lead inspector held meetings with a range of leaders to discuss safeguarding, provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' attendance, additional funding and pupils' behaviour.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, religious education and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. Inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors were unable to consider responses to Ofsted Parent View, due to the small number of responses received, but they considered the free-text response received during the inspection. Inspectors held telephone conversations with parents and carers during the inspection and spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school development plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records and minutes of meetings held by the management committee.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Edgerton	Ofsted Inspector

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