

Inspection of an outstanding school: Sherbourne Fields School

Rowington Close, Coventry, West Midlands CV6 1PR

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Outcome

Sherbourne Fields School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Sherbourne Fields is a truly special, inclusive school. Inspirational leaders and highly dedicated staff are unwavering in their simple vision that every moment counts. Caring relationships characterise this warm, caring school. Pupils appreciate the support adults give them. In turn, pupils display positive attitudes themselves. Pupils treat one another with absolute respect. This is a school where behaviour is exemplary.

Staff foster a strong sense of community and know pupils very well. This goes beyond learning needs and includes taking account of pupils' interests, worries and hopes. This holistic understanding of pupils is a strength of the school. It contributes significantly to the school's success.

Pupils have a broad range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school does everything possible to ensure that any barriers to learning are overcome, enabling pupils to achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils relish the variety of experiences on offer, from learning to be beekeepers and car mechanics to swimming in a Scottish Loch. Consequently, pupils thrive as happy, confident learners ready for their next steps and life in modern Britain.

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

The curriculum is carefully constructed from the early years to the sixth form. It is not just a set of subjects, but a carefully considered framework leading towards ambitious outcomes. These outcomes reflect pupils' wider development. This includes readiness for adult life, as well as helping pupils discover vocational and personal interests.

Across all pathways and subjects, the school has decided precisely what should be taught and when. The school has organised classes so that pupils with similar needs work with staff who are exceptionally skilled at meeting them. Staff's detailed knowledge of pupils ensures they can put precisely the right provision and adaptations in place. One pupil,

whose views were echoed by many others, said, 'I am really happy here because the staff understand me and help me.'

Communication is a high priority across the school. Staff work with families to understand how pupils communicate best. They put in place effective communication systems to help. These include signing, symbol exchange and assistive language devices. The school's work with pupils who might not use words to communicate is exceptional. Eye gaze, e-tran frames and touch-screen devices allow pupils to communicate with those around them.

From the moment pupils start school, reading takes centre stage. For pupils who are not yet ready to learn phonics, staff are skilled in helping them recognise and respond to sounds in the environment. When pupils are ready, they access daily lessons that develop their understanding of phonics. Teachers implement a structured phonics approach tailored to the needs of individual pupils. They ensure that the books pupils read are well matched to the phonics they know. To inspire pupils to love reading, staff regularly share books with them. These books are carefully chosen according to the needs of pupils.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Parents and carers say their children are eager to come each morning. The school endeavours to understand why pupils are absent and acts quickly to put support in place to help pupils attend regularly.

A varied and exciting menu of school clubs and wider opportunities enriches pupils' time at Sherbourne Fields. Communication, sports, space, sensory and art are just some of the clubs available. These are well attended. A climbing wall, zip line, swimming pool and an apiary further broaden pupils' learning experiences. Theatre workshops and school performances, including at the Royal Albert Hall, provide the stage on which pupils can showcase their talents. The school's own flat, combined with lessons in independent living and the personal, social, health education (PSHE) curriculum help pupils develop real-life functional skills.

Not a moment is wasted in preparing pupils for their future. Careers education starts in the primary years. Staff work tirelessly in partnership with pupils and their families to establish a clear sense of what pupils want for their own lives. The on-site café and workshop provide opportunities to help pupils develop vocational ambition and workplace experience.

Leaders at all levels support staff well and provide high-quality training so that everyone who works here can provide the very best for pupils. Staff appreciate the support and guidance they receive. They are extremely proud to work here and love doing so. Yet another strength of this school is the extent to which it supports other settings to help pupils with SEND. At Sherbourne Fields, there is a real moral purpose to improve the lives of pupils with SEND during their time in school and beyond.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in February 2014.

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	103760
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10322705
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	31
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Jayne Garner
Headteacher	Shivaun Duffy-Moriarty
Website	www.sherbournefields.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a large community special school serving pupils with a broad spectrum of needs.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Since the last inspection, the school has increased in size from 125 to 255 commissioned places.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders within the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, PSHE and communication and interaction. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions with leaders about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents and the school's website.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate. They also spoke to drivers and escorts of school transport.
- An inspector spoke to a member of the governing board, including the chair, and to a school improvement partner from the local authority.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Pollitt

His Majesty's Inspector

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