

Corley Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134533
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	316264
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Burdis HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	77
6th form	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Barker
Headteacher	Helen Bishton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Corley Coventry CV7 8AZ
Telephone number	01676 540218
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Age group	11-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school was redesignated as a school for students with complex social and communication difficulties in 2006. It is part of the Corley Centre, Coventry City's integrated provision for these students. All students have a statement of special educational need. Two thirds have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. Standards on entry are usually well below the national average. Overall, students come from homes where social and economic circumstances are below average. There are three times as many boys as girls and 13% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school provides extended day and residential provision as part of educational and personal development programmes.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Corley Centre is a good school. Its strengths lay in the strong leadership, good relationships and behaviour management approaches that help students to understand and manage their emotions and behaviour. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Good teamwork between education and care staff ensures that students are able to achieve well.

Teaching is good. Teachers have the knowledge and skills to deliver their subject well and demonstrate confidence in using the school's approaches for managing students with autistic spectrum disorder. Students are very aware of their personal targets and strategies they can use to manage their behaviour. They are less confident when talking about their learning targets. Marking does not consistently help students to know what they have to do to improve their work. Teachers do not always use information and communication technology (ICT) well enough to extend students' knowledge and skills.

The director and the senior leadership team provide very good direction to the work of the centre. Through effective monitoring and evaluation, the school can demonstrate the positive impact it is having on students' achievements, attendance and the number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The school has identified the need to develop further the role of subject leaders in their middle management role. The capacity for further improvement is good.

Students make good progress in their academic development. Many make more than the expected level of progress during Key Stage 3. Not many are able to sit GCSE examinations but most achieve success in alternative and appropriate external accredited courses at the age of 16. A good and varied curriculum offers choice and challenge to students. Personal development is outstanding. Social and independent life skills are developed very well through extended activities, residential opportunities, work-based learning and work experience. The enrichment curriculum, after-school clubs and extended provision all provide very good opportunities for students to increase their social skills and enjoy their learning. The school has achieved the Sportsmark and Healthy Schools accreditation, validating the very good work done in these areas.

The tutorial programme and personal, social and health education provide good opportunities to help students understand what they need to do to keep themselves safe and healthy. The school is particularly effective in seeking students' views and encouraging them to contribute to their own development and the school community. The good partnerships with mainstream schools, colleges and workplace providers extend students' opportunities and preparation for the world of work. Regular consultation with parents, students and the wider community informs developments. The school works closely with parents and other agencies to meet students' current and future needs. On rare occasions, the school is unable to meet fully the needs of students assessed as needing therapeutic approaches.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The good curriculum in the post-16 class enables students of all abilities to achieve a wide range of accreditation. Teaching is good: students try hard and receive good support and guidance. Relationships between adults and students are excellent and play a significant part in promoting good behaviour and independence. Lessons are generally well planned and structured, although staff do not always make good use of assessment information when

planning activities for individuals. Students are given good opportunities for work experience and work-related learning through excellent links with local colleges and the Connexions service, ensuring that they are well prepared for life after school. Post-16 is well led and managed and robust monitoring of the provision informs future developments.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 8

The residential provision makes an outstanding contribution to students' personal development and achievement. Students stay overnight at the school, usually for two nights at a time, when their annual review identifies that it would be beneficial to their academic and/or personal development. Very good links exist between the school and residential staff. Designed to promote independence and social skills, students access a good range of enjoyable social and recreational activities. The provision is well managed and the most recent Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) report judged the National Minimum Standards for residential special schools to be fully met or exceeded in all areas. Excellence was reported in the provision's contribution to students' enjoyment and achievement and in the provision of healthy nutritious meals and healthy eating. Good practice recommendations in the CSCI report have been fully addressed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers' marking helps students understand what they have to do to improve their work.
- Develop the role of subject leaders.
- Increase use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement is good. Students enter the school with a very wide range of abilities, but standards are well below average overall. The impact of good teaching, support and guidance is that students make good progress. Many who have not managed to learn well in a mainstream school setting respond well to the structured environment and make more than the expected progress during Key Stage 3, especially in science and mathematics. Progress is more variable in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, but still satisfactory overall. Careful assessment of students' capabilities informs entry to externally accredited courses in Key Stage 4 and post-16. As the intake changes, fewer students are entered for GCSE courses. All those entered in 2007 achieved A* to G grades in art and design, design and technology, and catering. Alternative accredited courses provide good opportunities for students to increase their core skills and gain knowledge and skills in independence and the world of work. Achievement in personal targets is good. The consistent implementation of the behaviour strategy allows students to understand and manage their own behaviour.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. The full range of the school's activities, including the extended day and boarding provision, contribute very well to students' personal development. A strong behaviour policy and effective management of students with autism spectrum disorder promote good social and moral development. Because of their needs some students have challenging behaviour, but they learn to understand their emotions and behaviours and are encouraged to identify the right strategy to keep control. Cultural and spiritual development is addressed well and despite their own challenges, students demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of others. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good with students actively engaged in lessons. The number of recorded behaviour incidents and temporary exclusions is falling. There have been no permanent exclusions. Students are confident that adults working with them will quickly deal with any concerns.

The school is very effective in promoting healthy lifestyles. Students enjoy a healthy breakfast and break time snacks, and are able to talk confidently about the differences between junk food and healthy food. Students understand the importance of keeping themselves safe and potential risks to their well-being. They have been involved in devising an anti-bullying policy and access drugs education. Students attend regularly and most say they enjoy school. Very good arrangements encourage students to express their views, participate in decision-making and influence the development of their school. They contribute to staff appointments. The long-running and active school council has clear procedures for ensuring all students can contribute ideas for discussion. A prefect system has given older students a real sense of responsibility. They take seriously their role in offering support and intervening to help younger students behave appropriately or deal with concerns. Good arrangements are in place to develop workplace and social skills in preparation for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teamwork is a key element in promoting learning and engaging and motivating students. Staff establish excellent relationships with students and these are used successfully to develop students' self-esteem. Well-established routines and good classroom organisation provide a secure environment in which students can learn. Planning is generally good, but assessment is inconsistent and is not used sufficiently well to feed into students' learning targets. For instance, the marking of students' work does not always pinpoint closely the next steps in learning. Teachers use a good range of methods to support students' understanding, but there are occasions when more appropriate resources could be used in lessons; for example, the text in one mathematics book was inappropriate and the content old-fashioned. Insufficient use is made of ICT to extend learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is being developed even further to provide a wide range of subjects and activities that are well suited to the students' interests and abilities. Staff have recognised the changing level of students' needs on entry to the school and the nature of what is taught has been adapted to assist learning. Provision for students' personal, social and health education and citizenship is good. Students receive good guidance on sex and drug education and learn how to deal with bullying. The curriculum is enriched exceptionally well. There is a very wide range of popular lunchtime and extra-curricular activities, including a variety of sports, arts and musical activities, which have a significant impact on students' learning. The 24-hour curriculum is a strong feature of school life because links between the care and academic staff are very good. Effective partnerships and links with local secondary schools, colleges and other external agencies enhance the provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Individualised target setting for personal development is well established and very effective in helping every student identify for himself or herself how they are going to deal with behaviour they want to change. Recently introduced systems to track academic progress are used well by staff to highlight strengths and gaps in a student's learning and action is taken to address needs. However, students are not always clear about their learning targets. Very good links exist between teachers and teaching assistants, and arrangements for safeguarding and health and safety are well understood and managed. Links with parents are good with almost all expressing confidence that their children are well cared for and that they are kept well informed of how well they are doing. Very good links with outside agencies such as the Connexions service, mainstream schools and colleges extend the quality and range of guidance in relation to courses and programmes available to students.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The director has very successfully led and managed the creation of a county-wide provision for complex social and communication difficulties whilst improving the quality of school-based provision. A strong senior leadership team with clearly defined roles provides good leadership of the educational, residential and outreach arms of the provision. The integration of residential, school and extended day provision complements and successfully promotes achievement and personal development. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, including accessing the views of students and parents/carers, are effective in informing priorities and actions for further improvement. The school's self-evaluation illustrates how well the school knows itself and appropriate priorities are incorporated into the school improvement plan. This includes the need to develop further the role of subject leaders. Performance data are used well to review the work of the school and set challenging yet realistic performance targets for

individual students and the school. Very occasionally transition plans do not provide sufficient multi-agency information to secure a smooth transition to post-16 placements for more complex cases. Careful consideration is given to providing for the small number of girls. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well, for example by providing an appropriate balance of support and challenge during the recent redesignation process. Careful consideration given to the new staffing structures and leadership arrangements is securing good use of resources and value for money. The capacity to improve further is good.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to thank you all for making our visit to Corley Centre so enjoyable. It was a pleasure for us to see you at work and to have the opportunity to talk to you about your school.

We thought there were many good things about your school, but particularly:

- your very positive contribution to your school – you often help each other and make good suggestions through your school council as to how you would like the school to develop
- your behaviour – and the way you work so hard not to interrupt lessons when you are feeling angry; we think all the staff are good at helping you think about and manage your behaviour
- the curriculum – we think you have many good opportunities to do interesting and exciting things, both in lessons and all the after-school clubs and in the residential provision
- the way Mrs Bishton and the other teachers run the school and work with you to make it better.

We think there are some things that would make it even better. The three main ones are that:

- you need more opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons
- teachers need to mark your work in a way that helps you to know what you have to do to improve
- those staff in charge of subjects need to have more opportunity to ensure that you do well.

You can help with this by checking that you know what you have to do next to improve your work and trying to do it. I hope you will continue to do as much as you can to make your school a good place to be.

Again, thank you very much for making us feel welcome in your school.