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15 December 2017

Mrs L Batch  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Batch

### **Short inspection of Corley Centre**

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017 with Sarah Ashley, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Christopher Field and Kim Ellis, Ofsted Inspectors, initially visited the school on 10 October 2017. The visits were the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in October 2013.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, governors and other senior leaders are highly committed to the school. Through effective teamwork, staff at all levels create an environment that is calm and friendly. The care and welfare of pupils is central to all that you do.

Parents are very happy with their children's experiences. One parent commented, 'Students are given so many opportunities to thrive at Corley and I cannot fault anything.' This view was typical of feedback from parents that inspectors spoke to and those that responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Staff develop positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils develop their social communication skills and are supported to understand the world around them. One pupil said: 'Staff here understand my autism and have the skills needed to bring us on in life.' Mentor time each morning enables pupils to develop their social communication skills as well as their mathematics and literacy skills. During this time, staff provide effective support to prepare pupils for the day ahead.

There is a strong focus on inclusion at the Corley Centre. You and the governors have recruited a team of skilled practitioners who are committed to making a real

difference to pupils' lives. As a result of your team's growing expertise, there are key strengths within several areas of your practice.

You and your team are reflective and thoughtful professionals. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. You are frank and clear about what you want to improve further. Governors share your openness and honesty. Governors are rightly proud of the school's positive journey of improvement over recent years.

At your last inspection you were invited to raise the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and make even better use of assessment information. A number of improvements have been made. You and your staff have worked successfully to improve pupils' opportunities to develop their skills in collaboration, independence, research and questioning. In English, science and personal, social and health education, staff use effective open-questioning techniques. This stretches pupils' thinking and helps them to gain a deeper understanding of their learning. As a result, pupils are engaged in their work and able to explain what they are learning and why. However, there is scope for the best teaching practice to be shared even more widely. The quality of teachers' questioning and the overall level of challenge is not consistently high in all classes.

Since the previous inspection, you have developed a robust monitoring system, which ensures that leaders and teachers understand pupils' needs very well. The system tracks academic progress, attendance, behaviour and social skills. On a half-termly basis you carefully analyse this information and respond promptly to any trends. You and your team devise and deliver additional support to address any emerging underachievement or dips in attendance. As a result of this strong analysis and response, the vast majority of pupils make consistently strong progress. However, fewer pupils make more rapid rates of progress, particularly in key stage 3. Although some assessment information must be treated with caution due to the small size of groups and the specific needs of individuals, you rightly identify that even more can be done to accelerate pupils' progress across the curriculum and improve their presentation of work. You have devised a range of strategies to address these areas for improvement. Strategies are showing early signs of success and must now be sustained and embedded.

Pupils experience a broad range of subjects in key stage 3 that balances the need for academic and social progression. In key stage 3 and Year 10, pupils also follow an accredited personal and social education programme. This incorporates British values and provides pupils with the skills needed to make informed decisions. At key stages 4 and 5, pupils follow employability and work-skills programmes that prepare them well for the next stage of their lives. The majority of subjects studied in key stage 4 are GCSEs which meet the needs of pupils. In key stage 5, pupils' experience is broadened with a well-developed work experience programme. This experience supports their learning in the classroom by bringing work-skills lessons to life. As a result of recent changes to the curriculum specifications and profile of pupils in the school, leaders have recognised the need to keep the subjects and qualifications on offer under review to ensure they continue to meet pupils' needs.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are highly effective. The designated safeguarding leader demonstrates a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of their role and the responsibilities of all staff. It is clear from school records and our discussions during the inspection that staff have the necessary knowledge and expertise to keep children safe. Child-protection records are of a good quality and are securely stored. Pupils are safe, feel safe and are well cared for.

As a result of regular staff training, staff are able to identify risks and safeguarding issues that are most relevant to pupils and their families. All know how to raise a concern and senior staff actively follow up concerns and put appropriate support in place. All of the staff who responded to the inspection survey agreed that pupils are safe.

Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally throughout the inspection. Pupils were able to tell inspectors how they keep themselves safe online.

## **Inspection findings**

I met with you and your leaders at the start of the inspection to review your self-evaluation and school improvement plans. As a result of our discussion we agreed several key lines of enquiry to focus inspection activities. These included: rates of attendance and fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils, the effectiveness of pupil premium expenditure, examining how well assessment information is used to ensure that pupils make strong progress; and assessing the extent to which the teaching of mathematics offers pupils an adequate level of challenge.

- As a result of a strong programme of support, the school is able to evidence clear improvements in attendance for specific pupils. Since the start of the academic year, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is above that of other pupils. Leaders keep a close watch on any persistent absence and speak with families daily if they have any concerns. Fixed-term exclusions have dropped considerably. Leaders acknowledge that their monitoring programme and resulting improvements must now be sustained.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to promote pupils' progress. Leaders have clear systems in place to track and monitor progress. Teachers are regularly held to account for pupils' progress and work together with leaders to respond to any underachievement. Staff have a strong awareness of pupils' needs. Consequently, there are no significant differences between the progress rates of different groups of pupils currently on roll. The valuable information held by leaders about the impact of pupil premium has not yet been transferred in full to the school's website.
- Assessment information is used effectively by the school to promote pupils' achievement. Many staff skilfully use what they know about pupils' learning to pose questions at the right time and make adjustments to tasks. This effective practice is still being embedded across the whole school.

- The teaching of mathematics is resulting in generally strong progress across the school. In the last academic year, there were some pockets of less-strong progress in key stage 3. In response, leaders are encouraging teachers to share what they do best and to learn from effective practice in order to boost progress. However, the overall level of challenge could still be higher. On occasions, pupils could be moved onto a new task or challenge at an earlier point in their learning.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons are engaging and purposeful. However, pupils' presentation and the pride that they take in their work is not consistently strong across the wider curriculum. In addition, some activities in the wider curriculum do not encourage pupils to develop and practise their writing skills fully.
- Governors are skilled and passionate about their role. They care deeply about the school and understand its strengths and areas for development well. They regularly participate in monitoring activities so that they have a clear understanding of the impact of leaders' actions. Governors have focused carefully on building capacity in leadership. The work of the governing body has supported the school on its continued journey of improvement.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in attendance are sustained and any persistent absence continues to be rigorously followed up
- the best teaching practice is shared more widely so that the overall level of challenge rises even further
- pupils consistently demonstrate the same levels of pride and presentation found in core subjects to all aspects of their work
- pupils are given more opportunities to practise and apply their writing skills across the curriculum
- the evaluations of the impact of pupil premium funding are fully transferred to the documents available on the school's website.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Keay  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

After the initial day of inspection, Ofsted decided that it was necessary to return to the school to gather further evidence to complete the inspection. This additional inspection day was led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Inspectors met with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of 24 responses to Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 17 free-text responses.

Inspectors observed teaching in the majority of the school's classes. Visits to lessons were undertaken jointly with school leaders. During observations, inspectors took account of learning in pupils' books. There were no students from the school's 16 to 19 provision in attendance on the second day of inspection. Students were all attending work-experience placements.

Meetings were held with leaders to discuss the school's work in several key areas. These included: analysis and tracking of pupils' behaviour and personal development, safeguarding and the single central record of checks on staff, attendance analysis, and pupil premium expenditure.

The lead inspector held a meeting with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector had a telephone discussion with the school's local authority adviser.