

# The Corner House School (Chs)

Laurel Farm, Dagnall End Lane, Bowley, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 9BD

## Inspection dates

5–7 June 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior leaders, governors and the proprietor work well together to ensure that pupils at this school access good teaching, an interesting and relevant curriculum and make good progress.
- The quality of personal development and welfare and behaviour is outstanding. Pupils make remarkable improvements in their behaviour, their attitudes to learning and attendance.
- Leaders have successfully improved the school since the last inspection. For example, they have supported staff to improve the quality of assessment.
- Teachers ensure that pupils feel positive about learning. They give pupils a wide experience of learning outside the classroom
- Teaching is good. It is generally well matched to the needs of the pupils. Teachers plan learning that engages and interests pupils.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly effective and leads to good outcomes.
- Some subjects, for example, art, religious education (RE) and languages, are not as well taught as English, mathematics and science and the work is not as interesting. Pupils do not have the opportunity to take examinations in these subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are rigorous and successful in their management of pupils' welfare.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

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

- Improve outcomes for pupils in art, RE and languages by:
  - making sure that the planning of learning in these subjects is consistently good
  - ensuring that pupils are sufficiently challenged by the curriculum content
  - making certain that the work set is engaging and interesting
  - ensuring that pupils are offered qualifications in these subjects that mean they are even better prepared for further education or training

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since taking up post in April 2018, the headteacher has ensured that pupils are making good progress. Her strong leadership enables her to form a clear understanding of the safeguarding culture which is effective.
- The school was formally owned by Aspirations, from April it is now owned by Keys Child Care. This change of proprietor was approved by the Department of Education. The governors and new proprietor work effectively with the headteacher and staff. Leaders have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Leaders are ambitious for the pupils who attend the school. The result is that teaching, learning and pupil outcomes are good. Teachers' planning shows clear targets for pupils. These targets are carefully tracked. They enable pupils to meet their potential.
- Leaders have an accurate and clear understanding of the school and its strengths and weaknesses. Upon taking up her appointment, for example, the headteacher changed the qualifications being offered to pupils so that GCSEs could be taken.
- The proprietor has brought to the school a robust and effective performance management policy. This ensures that staff progression through pay scales is closely linked to improvements in pupils' progress and behaviour.
- Leaders have a strong commitment to the development of staff. Staff have been enabled to take up a wide range of training opportunities, especially in behaviour management. This has led to pupils' personal development and behaviour and the promotion of their welfare being outstanding.
- Leaders monitor the work of teachers and teaching assistants effectively. They take effective action to improve teaching. The result is that pupils are well taught, they make good progress and they are safe.
- The pupil premium grant is spent effectively by leaders. For example, the funding has been used to make sure that pupils have a wide range of challenging resources that support their learning in English, mathematics and science.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Staff have successfully prioritised improving pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and their attitudes to learning. There is a clear emphasis on what the school calls 'experiential learning'. This means that pupils have a wide range of practical learning experiences in public settings and via work experience which are well supported by teaching staff.
- Pupils have access to independent careers advice and they have made informed choices about their future residence and further education.
- Some subjects are not as well led as others. These are RE, art and languages. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to ensure high levels of rigour and a high standard of resource in these subjects. While pupils follow appropriate schemes of work in these areas, there is not yet an opportunity to take GCSE qualifications in these subjects.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is good. Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong, a sense of personal responsibility and a respect for authority, Pupils develop positive attitudes towards themselves, other people and education. They learn about

rights and responsibilities in modern Britain through a rich and varied curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Leaders have designed a safeguarding curriculum that leads to pupils understanding how to stay safe on line, how to prevent bullying and how to keep themselves safe from child sexual exploitation. Staff have taught pupils how to make safe disclosures, how to pass information on and how to be polite and assertive in their interaction with others.
- The school has safeguarding and child protection policies that conform to the guidance of the Secretary of State and are fit for purpose. The school does not have a website, but these documents are easily available to staff, parents or local authority sending agencies.

## **Governance**

- Governors and the proprietor work effectively with leaders. Governors have set a clear strategic direction for the school and they have communicated their vision to the staff with clarity.
- Governors ensure challenge and support in equal measure. The proprietor ensures that the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning is well planned and is supported by good professional development. This leads to improved pupil outcomes.
- The headteacher feels well supported through regular meetings with members of the governing body and the proprietor. The headteacher gives clear information to the governing body and this is used well to plan the further direction of the school.
- Governors monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively. Learning is often conducted in community settings and through work experience. Governors' monitoring is responsive to this, with an appropriate emphasis on the continuous improvement of teaching and keeping pupils safe.
- Governors have ensured that improvements have been made since the last inspection. Assessments of attainment and progress are now accurate because they are moderated and standardised with other schools.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because leaders have ensured that the grants to support these pupils are used well.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is the first priority of leaders and staff. Leaders are highly conscious of the wide range of risks facing the pupils at the school. Leaders have secure and effective systems for helping pupils express any concerns. These concerns are resolved quickly.
- Leaders work in close contact with other agencies such as children's services. This means that information about safeguarding is communicated well between staff so they can pre-empt problems wherever possible.
- Pupils are taught about how to stay safe and how to exercise their rights and responsibilities. The result is that pupils learn how to interact safely with members of the

public, under close supervision by staff from the school.

- Staff are well trained to appoint staff according to statutory guidance. Staff are only appointed after leaders have undertaken extensive and thorough checks and new staff are well trained through safeguarding induction courses.
- Leaders have provided pupils with a wide range of detailed guidance on such dangers as child sexual exploitation and the risks of radicalisation and extremism. As a result, pupils are aware of what to do and who to contact if they have any concerns.
- Leaders and staff are vigilant and highly skilled at protecting pupils. They manage records well and they monitor pupils' safety closely. Staff help pupils feel aware of the dangers presented by daily life and confident that they can deal with risk.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching and learning is often varied and interesting. For example, there is effective teaching of literacy, numeracy and teaching of pupils in the community, on work experience, at the gym and in retail settings. Teachers are skilled at knowing how to balance a range of teaching techniques to keep pupils engaged and challenged.
- Staff make accurate assessments of pupils' work. This is because they have had training in the standards required by examinations boards. Staff have worked with colleagues in other schools to design accurate assessments and tests. The result is that pupils are successfully challenged and learning is usually well planned.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly effective and leads to pupils successfully taking qualifications in functional skills and GCSEs. Pupils make progress in skills such as handwriting and using accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Pupils have had very limited experiences of sustained education before they come on the school's roll. Teachers ensure that pupils feel positive about learning. They do this by, for example, giving pupils a wide experience of learning outside the classroom. Staff make sure that lessons are as practical as possible and related to the world of work.
- Teachers are committed to making sure pupils engage with learning and feel confident and successful. This means that pupils have a positive outlook and feel well prepared for the next stage in their education and training.
- Pupils respond well to the feedback that teachers give them. Teachers consistently apply the school's assessment policy, which ensures that pupils know what to improve and how they can achieve success.
- Staff work well with their colleagues in the residential setting on pupils' learning. As a result, pupils quickly develop more positive attitudes to learning than when they first join the school. The staff make sure that pupils are nurtured and challenged in equal measure.
- Learning in RE, art and languages is not as strong as it could be. This is because schemes of work in these subjects are not as well planned or resourced, so pupils do not learn in as much depth as they do in English, mathematics and science.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Outstanding**

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils make significant improvements in their personal development. Pupils make major improvements in behaviour and their engagement with learning. Pupils make rapid gains in personal skills that underpin learning, such as resilience, listening and effort.
- Staff keep thorough, detailed and systematic records of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The result is that pupils feel that they are understood by staff. Staff use a range of interventions to make sure that pupils are supported. These include one-to-one coaching and highly effective mentoring sessions.
- Staff use behaviour support plans effectively to record details of personal welfare and give pupils strategies for coping with stress and trauma. There are books for pupils to record their thoughts and feelings. These are sensitively shared, with the agreement of pupils, with other teachers and with residential staff and this means that pupils work through and overcome personal problems. As a result, pupils develop high-quality skills of self-reflection.
- Staff track and analyse the ways in which pupils develop their personal skills and attitudes, identifying what issues are likely to trigger difficulties and plan to work address them. Staff work successfully together to review this information and help pupils to manage their development.
- There is an effective rewards system. Pupils feel fairly rewarded and say that this system is consistently applied. Staff add daily points to pupils' reward records.
- Pupils receive training in how to shop effectively and they gain vocational experience in hair and beauty. Positive attitudes are rewarded with outings to the cinema and bowling. This gives staff further opportunities for mentoring and coaching pupils. The result is that pupils improve their attitudes to learning.
- There are effective daily education engagement points used by staff to inform each other of factors in the pupils' school day including learning and welfare issues. Staff are effective in teaching pupils to make healthy choices about their personal welfare. For example, pupils learn to make healthy food choices in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Food modules. In personal, social, health and economic lessons, pupils learn about how to develop appropriate attitudes to drugs and avoid addictive behaviour. In sport, pupils learn how to exercise. Staff use trampolining sessions to help pupils develop positive attitudes to physical education.
- Staff help pupils to develop positive relationships in school and in the wider community. For example, staff have taught pupils how to be respectful and courteous. They learn that using derogatory language is not acceptable.
- Staff use role play skilfully to help pupils learn how to deal with confrontation and bullying. As a result, records show that there is no bullying at the school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and how to develop positive attitudes to other pupils and adults.
- Pupils make 'future plan' documents that help them plan for the life they want. These show realistic and thoughtful attitudes to the chances and challenges they will face.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils make dramatic improvements in their standards of behaviour. Pupils have developed quickly skills of resilience, courtesy and thoughtfulness towards others.
- Levels of attendance have improved significantly for pupils at the school from very low levels. Pupils' attendance is improving towards national averages. Teachers work closely together to plan pupils' days and prepare them to attend well. Staff know that there are likely to be considerable changes from day to day so, for example, they encourage attendance and reward it when there have been improvements.
- Communication with care workers is frequent via phone, email and in person. This means that pupils' needs and attitudes are carefully tracked and improvements made where necessary.
- Staff successfully help pupils feel they have a future. Staff show pupils a range of routes to learn and engage. Staff provide pupils with opportunities to gain a range of appropriate qualifications in vocational subjects that motivate pupils to improve attitudes to learning.
- Breakfast is offered at school so that pupils want to attend early. Visual timetables make sure that pupils have a clear idea of the day ahead and feel confident about what is planned.
- Pupils have improved their punctuality and preparedness for learning. The result is that pupils are ready for their day, they develop appropriate attitudes to authority and confidently sit formal functional skills tests and GCSE examinations.
- When pupils attend work experience they are well prepared, have a positive attitude to work and staff monitoring shows pupils gain in confidence and attitude.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Pupils make good progress in a range of subjects including English and mathematics. Pupils' starting points are often much lower than those of other pupils of a similar age however they quickly make progress because learning is well planned and well taught.
- All pupils take qualifications that challenge them and prepare them for later education and training. Pupils achieve success in qualifications, passing at level 1 and level 2 in Functional Skills English and mathematics and at ASDAN level 1, for example. Some pupils have been entered GCSE examinations this year.
- All pupils who attend the school are disadvantaged and have SEN and/disabilities. They make good progress. Staff ensure that they use accurate information about pupils' prior knowledge and skills.
- Rates of achievement have improved since the last inspection, with a higher proportion of pupils achieving well in formal qualifications. This means that standards of attainment are improving towards national averages, though this is difficult to measure with so few pupils on roll.
- Leaders ensure that most able pupils do as well as they can. Staff have entered them for challenging GCSEs in English and mathematics and pupils have risen to the challenge of

this opportunity.

- Pupils are offered a range of demanding and interesting fiction and non-fiction texts to read. Pupils make progress in developing reading skills such as comprehension and inference.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, or to go to training or employment. Pupils who leave the school at the end of Year 11 usually go on to work-related learning at colleges of further education.
- Outcomes in RE, art and languages are not as strong as in other subjects such as English, mathematics and science. Although pupils understand about the benefits of diversity in RE, for example, and use a range of media in art, there is insufficient deeper learning. Leaders have plans to address this.



## School details

Unique reference number	136025
DfE registration number	885/6038
Inspection number	10038837

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	9 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Keys Group Head Office
Chair	Nicola Kelly
Headteacher	Michelle Woodward
Annual fees (day pupils)	£35,000
Telephone number	01527 63327
Website	There is no website for this school
Email address	<a href="mailto:nicolakelly@keyschildcare.co.uk">nicolakelly@keyschildcare.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15–16 October 2014

## Information about this school

- The Corner House School is very small independent special school for pupils between the ages of nine and 19 years who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Since the last inspection there has been a change in proprietor from Aspirations to the Keys Group.
- Since the last inspection there has been a new headteacher appointed and a new governing body has been formed. These changes took place from 1 April 2018. The Department for Education has been notified.

- All pupils are disadvantaged, and all are in the care of local authorities.
- The school does not use alternative provision or any other off-site unit.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been no referrals to the school for pupils in key stage 2 or the sixth form. The school currently has no pupils in key stage 2 or the sixth form.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector looked at evidence of teaching and learning and work produced by pupils currently at the school and from last year.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the headteacher and other members of the school staff, including the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body and representatives of the proprietorial body.
- The inspector had discussions with the heads of the Virtual Schools in the local authorities who place pupils at the school.
- The inspector had discussions with pupils.
- The inspector sought any relevant information from the local children's safeguarding board.
- The single central record, a range of records of recruitment, welfare plans and records of actions taken to keep pupils safe were scrutinised.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including those the school produces as part of its self-evaluation and development planning
- The inspector looked at four responses from the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Parent View and no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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