

Coventry Extended Learning Centre

Bath Street, Hillfields, Coventry CV1 5GU

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet embedded a cohesive approach to monitoring and improving the work of the three centres. As a result, there is limited analysis of information about pupils.
- Leaders have not yet had sufficient impact on improving the quality of the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes for all pupils.
- The recently devised systems to track pupils' progress from their starting points are not yet used consistently for all pupils.
- Middle leaders' roles are not clearly defined. They do not have sufficient time to carry out their roles effectively.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) does not have sufficient time to ensure that the sizeable group of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive the support they need.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not of a consistently good standard across all sites and all subjects. Teachers' questioning and feedback does not consistently challenge pupils to deepen their learning.
- Pupils' literacy skills are not developed well enough across all curriculum subjects.
- Due to the significant increase in the number of pupils on the roll at the centre, some pupils are taking part in courses that are not well matched to their needs and interests.
- While there are clear improvements from very low starting points, attendance is low and a large proportion of pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, social moral and cultural development and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are limited and not planned systematically.

The school has the following strengths

- The local authority and management board have established a clear vision for the future of the centre. All stakeholders are strongly committed to improving the provision for this vulnerable group of pupils.
- Recent improvements to the curriculum have ensured that pupils are able to access accreditation that is better matched to their abilities.
- Pupils are safe across all sites. Pupils are supported well to improve their behaviour.
- Pupils benefit from the wide range of work-related learning opportunities that are provided.
- Strong, nurturing relationships between staff and pupils are clear to see in all centres.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a cohesive approach to leadership and management is shared and understood by all staff across all centres by:
 - developing a systematic, shared approach to the monitoring and analysis of information about the quality of teaching and learning, progress, behaviour and attendance in order to target actions that have a positive impact
 - further developing the role of middle leaders, through providing clearly defined roles and responsibilities and a suitable amount of time for them to carry out their responsibilities effectively
 - ensuring that the SENCo also has sufficient time to carry out her responsibilities effectively, including being able to monitor the impact of the additional support pupils receive
 - further developing and embedding the recently developed assessment system so that it is used to track the progress of all pupils and identify where additional support is required to accelerate pupils' progress
 - further developing the curriculum offer so that all pupils are able to participate in courses that are well matched to their needs and interests.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - teachers' use of questioning is more effective in deepening pupils' understanding of their learning, ensuring that they are challenged to achieve the standards of which they are capable
 - pupils are better supported to develop their literacy skills in all curriculum subjects so that they apply their grammar, vocabulary and spelling skills and knowledge more consistently
 - pupils are provided with well-planned learning opportunities that further enhance their personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Continue to further reduce rates of absence and persistent absence for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The centre has experienced significant change since the last inspection. Two additional centres for key stage 4 pupils are now included in the centre's provision. However, leaders have not ensured that there is a cohesive approach to all aspects of leadership and management across the three centres. As a result, the interim headteacher does not have a good enough overview of all aspects of their work.
- Systems to check on pupils' progress, standards of teaching and learning, behaviour and attendance are at varying stages of development. They are not consistently applied across all centres. Consequently, some centre leaders have a better understanding of the impact of their work on pupils' overall development than others.
- Provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is limited because the SENCo does not have sufficient time to carry out her responsibilities effectively. She is not able to check whether additional strategies to support pupils are being applied consistently or are having a positive impact on pupils' progress and outcomes. Despite this, she has an accurate understanding of the needs of these pupils. She has ensured that the additional needs of a number of pupils have been more accurately identified. As a result, these pupils are now benefiting from more specialist provision.
- Middle leaders' roles are not sufficiently developed and as a result they are having a limited impact across the centres. Like the SENCo, they do not have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities and they are also unclear about their remit beyond the centre in which they are based. The skilled subject leader for English is providing some coaching and mentoring support for staff. This work is at an early stage of development but is beginning to make a difference to the quality of teaching in English.
- The curriculum is not yet sufficiently fine-tuned to ensure that it is well matched to pupils' interests and needs. The curriculum for each centre varies according to staff expertise. A sizeable number of pupils are participating in alternative provision beyond the three centres. While participation in these courses is benefiting some pupils, others have been placed on them because of capacity issues at the centres. As a result, some pupils do not engage in these courses sufficiently well and do not sustain their placements.
- The interim leaders of the centre understand the challenges the centre faces during this period of transition and restructuring of the provision. There has been some turbulence in staffing, with high levels of staff absence, which has hampered the rate of progress leaders are making. However, leaders are well supported by the local authority and other secondary headteachers and groups of schools (collaboratives) to make sure that the provision meets the needs of this vulnerable group of pupils. The recent appointment of a substantive headteacher has the potential to strengthen the capacity for further improvement.
- The interim headteacher, well supported by the previous interim executive headteacher and the management board, has ensured that the strengths and weaknesses across the centres have been accurately identified and there are now positive signs of improvement.

- The interim headteacher has raised expectations of pupils' outcomes. More pupils are now taking external examinations such as GCSEs at an appropriate level, ensuring that they are better prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training.
- The monitoring of the use of alternative provision is well managed. A shared information management system across all providers of alternative education ensures that detailed information about pupils' needs is known and understood.
- Centre leaders ensure that parents and carers receive regular information about their child's performance, engagement and attendance at school.

Governance of the school

- The management board, which consists of a group of senior leaders from other educational providers and representatives from the local authority, has worked with interim leaders to ensure a clarity of vision for the centre. The board, chaired by a committed local headteacher, has:
 - ensured that the purpose and function of the provision which serves vulnerable pupils across the city are clearly understood by all professionals so that schools can make appropriate referrals
 - worked with the local authority and centre leaders to agree a system of supported transfers for pupils to return to mainstream schools where appropriate
 - ensured that members are provided with information from leaders which informs their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses that exist across the centres, along with the work that is needed to bring about further improvements
 - commissioned additional external support and advice to monitor the work of the centre to ensure that improvements are being made and leaders are being held to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Each centre has its own designated safeguarding leader, and additional cover arrangements are in place if these members of staff are not on site. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff receive appropriate training in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff receive frequent safeguarding updates during briefing sessions.
- Staff across the centres have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and to whom they should report any concerns.
- Leaders ensure that suitable pre-employment checks on staff are carried out before they begin their employment at the centre.
- Leaders robustly address any safeguarding concerns which may arise concerning staff, meeting the statutory duties set out in the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.
- Effective procedures are in place to check on pupils who do not arrive at school. These include texts and phone calls home, and appropriate referrals for children who are missing from education.

- Safeguarding arrangements at alternative provisions are robust. Providers use the shared management system to alert centres if pupils do not arrive for their sessions. Providers are clear about procedures for reporting any safeguarding concerns about pupils which may arise during their time at alternative provisions.
- Risk assessments are in place for a range of activities and environments. All pupils who go off-site have a personal risk assessment. Staff ensure that these are reviewed and updated following any incidents, with additional control measures identified.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The standard of teaching and learning across the three centres is variable. Where teaching is weaker, pupils are not sufficiently well supported to achieve the standards of which they are capable. Teachers do not ensure that the follow-on tasks that they give pupils are completed, and as a result pupils are not challenged sufficiently well in their learning.
- Teachers' use of questioning lacks precision and challenge. Too often, teachers provide answers to pupils' questions rather than enabling pupils to reflect on their learning and work out solutions for themselves.
- The application of literacy skills in subjects other than English is not well embedded. Pupils' vocabulary and use of subject-specific language is not developed sufficiently well. In some subjects, teachers do not consistently address pupils' grammar and spelling errors. As a result, pupils go on to repeat these errors.
- The least able pupils are not supported sufficiently well to develop their writing. Tasks are not broken down sufficiently to enable pupils to redraft and improve their work, and feedback to pupils is limited to comments such as, 'You need to write more.'
- Pupils have limited opportunities to develop their spiritual moral, social and cultural understanding, especially in key stage 4. Some activities seen in lessons and in pupils' work supported this understanding. For example, inspectors observed pupils in key stage 3 discussing features of North Korea and another group making cultural links through Egyptian Art. However, pupils told inspectors that they had limited opportunities for trips and visits because of 'naughty behaviour'.
- Behaviour for learning in lessons is variable. Where teachers use reward systems effectively and match work to pupils' abilities, pupils are more likely to engage in their learning. However, in some lessons, low-level disruption was observed too frequently and was not addressed consistently well by staff. Lessons are also affected by some pupils' poor attendance, leading to work having to be repeated for some pupils.
- The presentation of pupils' work in books varies across subjects and key stages. In some books, pupils do not take pride in their work. Some work is unfinished, and pages are 'doodled' on. In other books, pupils' pride in their work is evident. For example, pupils at the Wyken Centre (key stage 3) were keen to show their work to the inspector. Inspectors saw some well-presented work in English and history workbooks.
- Strong relationships which exist between staff and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' engagement in lessons. Although some pupils have experienced disruption to their education, staff help them to understand the purpose and value of re-engaging with education.

- Pockets of strong subject knowledge among staff enable pupils to develop their skills in a range of subjects. The most able pupils in key stage 4 are well supported to improve their writing in English. Work over time shows progress in this group of pupils' fluency and sophistication in writing. In both food technology and sports science, pupils are clear about how to improve their work because they receive effective feedback and guidance from their teachers.
- Where the school's assessment system is embedded, teachers use this information more effectively to ensure that work is better matched to pupils' abilities. Inspectors saw evidence of progress in pupils' books over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school has only recently introduced PSHE into the curriculum, and there is currently no whole-school scheme of work. As a result, planning tends to be ad hoc rather than systematic. Leaders recognise that planning for PSHE requires further work.
- Some pupils have poor rates of attendance and as a result are not developing their resilience for learning sufficiently well. Some pupils have negative attitudes to school and do not engage with their learning. Pupils who are well placed in alternative provision are more positive about their experience because they understand its purpose.
- Where pupils are engaged in their learning and school experience, they are better supported to develop their resilience. As a result, the school has recently been successful in returning a number of pupils to mainstream school. Most pupils are sustaining their places in their new schools.
- Pupils are safe at school, and told inspectors that this was the case. Pupils learn about ways in which they can keep themselves safe, appropriate to their needs. Inspectors saw a group pupils being supported in a sensitive way to develop their understanding of child sexual exploitation. Pupils have recently been supported to develop their understanding of the prevalence of knife crime and its associated risks.
- Some courses at alternative provision enhance pupils' personal development through the accredited courses on offer and the engaging activities provided for the pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There is no one agreed system to monitor behaviour across all centres, and, as a result, the information the interim headteacher holds is of varying quality and detail. For example, at the Wyken Centre, behaviours are recorded and tracked in detail, and analysed to identify trends and patterns of behaviour according to type, frequency,

location and time of day. At the Link Centre, information is restricted to the number of incidents which have taken place and there is no strategic analysis to inform behaviour support and interventions.

- Attendance rates across all three centres are not analysed sufficiently well. Leaders are not yet able to identify patterns in attendance to see if there are correlations between pupils' attendance at the school and the activities in which they participate. Analysis during the inspection showed that pupils' attendance at alternative provision is better than at the school.
- Inspectors identified that, for a very small number of pupils, incorrect codes were being used when pupils were sent home from school, resulting in unlawful exclusions. Leaders acknowledged that greater clarity of recording and guidance for staff are required to ensure that this practice ceases.
- At the time of the inspection, a proportion of pupils were only attending school on a part-time basis, due to what was described by leaders as 'issues with capacity'. Leaders have now taken steps to address this and reassured inspectors that this would be remedied within the next two weeks.
- Pupils are well supported to manage their behaviour while in the school. Detailed behaviour plans are written for a number of pupils who require additional support. Teachers use these plans effectively to inform their teaching activities, classroom organisation and support for pupils.
- The focus on de-escalating challenging behaviour is evident in staff's practice in school, and the positive relationships that exist help to reduce the risk of incidents. While all staff receive training to carry out physical interventions if they are required to keep pupils safe, the use of interventions is negligible.
- Inspectors' analysis of the frequency of behaviour incidents shows that they are reducing over time at each of the centres.
- Pupils' attendance at school is low, and rates of persistent absence are high. While overall attendance rates remain stubbornly low, leaders provided compelling evidence to show that, for some pupils, their attendance had improved from previous very low starting points.
- The newly formed inclusion and attendance team has had a positive impact on improving attendance for a targeted group of low-attending pupils.
- The school works closely with the local authority officer to target pupils who have low attendance in order to bring about improvements. Attendance concerns are followed up with rigour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Key stage 4 outcomes for pupils in 2017 were lower than those seen in 2016. The number of qualifications achieved by pupils varied according to the centre in which they were based.
- Leaders currently evaluate the progress made by pupils at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 in English and mathematics, but do not check the progress of other year groups in a systematic way. Leaders are confident that the recently introduced assessment system

will enable them to improve their monitoring of progress and attainment across all year groups. Leaders are not yet able to track progress formally in subjects other than English and mathematics.

- Leaders do not have systems in place to track the progress pupils make in alternative provisions. They receive termly reports about pupils' engagement but do not analyse this information to evaluate the impact of the provisions on pupils' outcomes. Inspectors saw evidence at the alternative provisions which showed that pupils were making progress towards their qualifications.
- The school provides impartial careers advice to pupils at the end of Year 10 and in Year 11. Pupils are supported to visit colleges and workplaces, and the adviser contributes to pupils' transition plans. However, there is currently no support for pupils in Years 8 and 9. Leaders have reviewed their arrangements for careers advice and guidance, and additional support will be available for pupils from September 2018.
- At the end of the 2017 academic year, approximately one third of pupils were not in education, employment or training (NEET). The current proportion of pupils who are likely to be NEET in 2018 is at a similar level.
- Work in books and the school's progress information show that pupils are making progress from their starting points. There is no significant difference in the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. The school's current progress information shows an improvement on the last year's progress. Information shows that some pupils are making accelerated progress.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision are able to access a wide range of mainly vocational qualifications, from entry level to level 2, ensuring that they are being prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training. Pupils responded positively to the school's survey about alternative provision with comments such as: 'I fit in a lot better than at school', and 'I now know and have an understanding of future choices in work.'
- The English subject leader is providing more challenge to pupils at the Swanswell Centre. This year, most pupils achieved a level 1 functional skills qualification in English and have begun working towards a level 2 qualification.
- A number of pupils have successfully returned to a mainstream school following a period of support at the school. The majority of these pupils are now permanently on the roll at their mainstream school. Leaders have received positive comments from the receiving schools following a period of transition. These include references to pupils' good attendance, behaviour, and pupils being on track to achieve their GCSE qualifications.

School details

Unique reference number	134269
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10048250

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Paul Green
Interim headteacher	Anne Walker
Telephone number	02476 787951
Website	www.coventry.gov.uk/info/257/extended_learning_centre
Email address	anne.walker@coventry.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 November 2014

Information about this school

- Coventry Extended Learning Centre (CELC) is a pupil referral unit based across three centres in Coventry. Wyken ELC caters for key stage 3 pupils, and Swanswell and The Link ELCs cater for key stage 4 pupils.
- At the time of the previous inspection, only key stage 3 pupils were based at the provision.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in the leadership of the provision. The acting headteacher took on the role of centre leader at Wyken ELC and an interim headteacher was appointed in May 2017 to lead the work of the three centres within the CELC. From January to April 2018, she was supported by an interim executive headteacher, who is also the substantive headteacher of a local secondary school. The interim executive headteacher has now relinquished her role but continues to provide advice and guidance to the Centre as required.

- The provision is currently undergoing a staffing restructure, with support from the local authority and the management board.
- A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up his post in September 2018.
- The school is currently operating significantly over its capacity for pupil numbers. New admission protocols have been agreed, and pupil numbers are set to reduce for September 2018.
- Pupils who attend the CELC have experienced disruption in their education. A significant number of pupils have been permanently excluded from other schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attend the centre is well above average.
- Approximately one third of pupils who attend the centre have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school has two additional off-site bases at Grace Academy and Lyng Hall School. The school also uses 16 work-based learning providers: Allure, Belgrade Theatre, Brakes Training, City College, Creative Optimistic Visions, Coventry Building and Welding Academy, CWT, Dare to Dream, Educ8, Heart of England, Henley, Learn2, Moor Farm Stables, Positive Youth Foundation, Pet-Xi and Right Trax.
- At the time of the inspection, all Year 11 pupils were on study leave.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the interim headteacher, the previous interim executive headteacher, centre leaders, middle leaders and the chair of the management board. They also met with the local authority adviser. The lead inspector met with the director of children’s services.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and looked at a range of safeguarding documentation, including the school’s single central record which details employment checks leaders make, child protection files, and accident and incident reports.
- The lead inspector spoke to the school’s external improvement consultant by telephone.
- Inspectors visited all three centres and saw parts of lessons, often accompanied by senior leaders. They scrutinised pupils’ work across all year groups and looked at the school’s assessment information. A range of documentation was evaluated, including management board minutes and records of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors visited two of the work-based learning providers – Right Trax, and Positive Youth Foundation. They spoke to the members of staff who have responsibility for work-related learning.
- There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online parent survey, or Ofsted’s pupil survey. Inspectors considered the very small number of staff surveys completed. Inspectors considered the school’s own pupil surveys and they talked to staff both informally and formally about their views of the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Sarah Ashley	Ofsted Inspector
Melanie Callaghan-Lewis	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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