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Mr Stuart Playford
Headteacher
The Braybrook Centre
Lawnswood Avenue
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Dear Mr Playford

Short inspection of The Braybrook Centre (key stage 3 pupil referral unit)

Following my visit to the school on 26 March 2019 with Derek Barnes, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in December 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and your senior leaders took up post after the previous inspection. Since then, you have recruited very effective middle leaders and recently qualified teachers. Your strong leadership, and the hard work and commitment of staff, have created a rich climate of support, trust, achievement and respect (STAR) throughout the school.

You and your staff have worked successfully to respond to the changing characteristics of your intake. Your pupils have a wide range of complex social, emotional and behavioural needs. Nearly all pupils are admitted having been excluded permanently twice from mainstream schools and their earlier experiences of education were negative. Most pupils at school have an education, health and care plan or are being considered for one. Instead of returning to a mainstream school after a short spell at Braybrook, most pupils now stay until the end of Year 9 before transferring to a neighbouring key stage 4 pupil referral unit (PRU).

You know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have tackled areas for improvement from the previous inspection successfully. Teachers usually set challenging work for pupils and have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are doing. In addition, you have provided training for your staff and revised the curriculum to cater for pupils' individual interests, attitudes and experiences.

Your welcoming and friendly staff ensure that they are properly informed about

pupils' different needs by liaising carefully with pupils' previous schools. This helps new pupils to settle in quickly. A key feature of the school is the emphasis placed on developing positive and trusting relationships between staff, pupils, parents and carers. This creates confidence in pupils and supports an ethos where all are expected to achieve success.

Pupils usually enjoy school. Most believe it is helping them to develop personally and learn successfully. Parents are grateful for the work of the school and the difference it has made to their children's lives.

Pupils and staff benefit tangibly from being part of the Lawnswood Campus, which is a federation of three different PRUs. The federation provides access to good-quality training, specialist teaching resources and extensive expertise in managing pupils' behaviour. It is very well led by a very experienced executive headteacher, who has been instrumental in developing a shared and inclusive vision across the three PRUs. A highly experienced and effective management board oversees the work of the federation. The federation is expanding and improving accommodation, including by building a new sports facility.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is led well. Pupils' welfare and safety are priorities for the staff. All staff are trained regularly in keeping pupils safe and know what to do if any difficulties arise.

Staff are vigilant and make careful checks on pupils, which helps to keep them safe. A member of the management committee oversees the safeguarding work of the school, which is audited by external agencies.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. They believe that their relationships with staff and each other are positive. They usually work together sensibly and safely, including when undertaking practical activities, going on trips or playing competitive sport. Pupils know who to speak to if they have concerns. They understand what is expected of them when they are in school.

Leaders at the school are aware of local and national issues that may affect pupils. Assemblies and social conversations are focused on helping pupils keep themselves and others safe. Pupils are helped to understand the hazards of gang culture, misusing social media, peer-on-peer abuse, extremist behaviour and forced marriages. During the visit, pupils spoke movingly about raising funds for a national charity, Precious Lives, following a visit by a parent whose son had been affected by violent knife crime.

A large proportion of pupils need outside help and support and this work is well organised and managed. Where needed, the school is tenacious in following up referrals to other agencies. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records, including of recruitment checks, are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' attendance is good and improving. It is better now than at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils attend well, although a few have poor attendance. Leaders work closely with other agencies, including the police, to monitor attendance and check on pupils' whereabouts. An attendance officer works well with families and other agencies, including by removing obstacles to good levels of attendance. Many pupils arrive early at school to eat breakfast. If any pupils are late, they are helped to settle in class without fuss.
- Pupils' behaviour in assemblies and lessons is usually good. Pupils engage positively with well-established routines at the start of lessons. They usually listen to instructions and respond proportionately to any questions. Once they are involved in tasks they concentrate for sustained periods. They often work together and help each other. Pupils who do become unsettled are usually refocused very quickly. If their behaviour worsens, staff remain calm and manage the situation effectively.
- Teachers promote good behaviour by the consistent award of 'achievement points'. The number of points awarded has risen dramatically in the last 18 months, reflecting improved behaviour and effort.
- Pupils' behaviour in social time and around the school is not always as well regulated. A small minority of pupils, often those who are newly arrived, can become noisy or disruptive. However, these instances are dealt with promptly. Leaders analyse these incidents carefully and, where feasible, take prompt action to prevent their recurrence. Instances of fixed-term exclusion have reduced markedly in the last 12 months.
- Leaders altered the curriculum last year to engage and interest pupils better. All pupils now study a reasonable breadth of national curriculum subjects, including English, mathematics, science, creative arts, humanities and physical education.
- In addition, pupils have opportunities to acquire a range of other accreditations, including for outdoor learning. A programme of additional activities and trips provides further interest and breadth. A few pupils have access to construction facilities at the key stage 4 PRU. Leaders are introducing more religious education and a modern foreign language from next year. Moreover, they are ensuring that the curriculum offers coherent pathways into the courses available at the key stage 4 PRU.
- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the previous inspection. Initial assessment of pupils is thorough and their personal and academic development is reviewed frequently. Teachers check the accuracy of their assessment with others in the school and across the federation. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching, for example in mathematics, from across the federation.
- Pupils are mostly set challenging work that follows on from previous learning. However, not all teachers structure learning so pupils achieve full understanding of key knowledge and concepts. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to remember what they have learned.

- Many pupils join the school with poor basic skills or rudimentary knowledge and understanding. Although pupils are taught basic skills well in the core subjects, they are not given enough opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Overall, pupils make good progress during their time at school. They develop confidence and make a positive contribution to the school community. They learn to adjust their behaviour so that it is more acceptable. They usually work hard in lessons and respond well to teachers and other staff. Consequently, they usually learn and achieve well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers give pupils more opportunities to practise basic skills across a wider range of subjects
- learning is structured carefully to help pupils understand and remember more about key concepts and knowledge.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the management board, the executive headteacher of the Lawnswood Campus, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Cladingbowl

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection we observed pupils in lessons and around the school. We spoke to them at break and lunchtimes about their experience of school. We looked at the work in their books and folders and asked them about their learning. We met with senior leaders and other staff and scrutinised key documents, including information about safeguarding and the progress being made by pupils. We met with management board members, the executive headteacher and a representative of the local authority. We spoke with an ex-pupil and a parent. We considered responses to the school's own questionnaire, which was issued recently to parents. There were no responses to Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire.