

Inspection of Coventry Extended Learning Centre

Axholme Road, Wyken, Coventry CV2 5BD

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Coventry Extended Learning Centre has been through a period of significant change. The interim headteacher knows the areas that need to improve and with other leaders has started to address them. Expectations are rising and improvement work has quickened. However, leaders are yet to realise this vision. There is still much more to do to improve pupils' academic achievement and broader social, moral and cultural development.

Pupils who are new to the school often struggle to manage their behaviour. Staff work patiently alongside pupils to build relationships and model good behaviour. Leaders make regular checks and support staff and pupils. As a result, for most pupils, incidents of poor behaviour reduce. Pupils can then begin to reconnect with their education. Many grasp this chance and return successfully to mainstream school.

Pupils know that staff will deal with incidents of bullying quickly. Staff support the victim and address the issue with the preparator so that it does not happen again. Consequently, pupils say they are not worried about bullying.

Pupils in key stage 4 can access a range of 'work related learning' courses. Leaders place pupils on courses that correlate with their talents and interests. Many pupils benefit from this opportunity.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders provide pupils with an academically challenging and suitable curriculum. Pupils study a broad range of subjects at key stage 3. Leaders meet with pupils as they approach Year 10 to guide them onto either a 'work related' or 'school based' route. This means that the curriculum meets pupils' academic, and social and emotional needs.

Over the past year, leaders have significantly amended the subject curriculums. They have thought about the breadth of pupils' study in each subject and the order of new learning. Leaders have started to link the key stage 4 and key stage 3 curriculums together. This improved curriculum means that pupils are learning more than they did in the past. However, there is much more to do. In some subjects, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to know for future learning. In addition, they have not clearly signposted teachers to the prior knowledge pupils must have when learning something new. This means that pupils are trying to build learning on shaky ground.

The curriculum is implemented effectively in many subjects. Teachers generally know their subjects well. However, teachers do not identify pupils' starting points consistently well. This means that, in some instances, teachers are not adapting their teaching and reshaping explanations to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving but is still uneven. Leaders are developing a 'menu' of interventions. These will support pupils' learning and wider social and emotional needs. Some are already in place. These range from individual mentoring with staff coaches to 'draw and talk' sessions in art. This helps leaders to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils with gaps in their phonics knowledge improve their reading. Instead, staff use alternative methods to support pupils rather than tackling the root cause. This means that pupils are not getting the help they need.

Leaders introduced a new personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum in February 2022. This curriculum helps develop pupils' understanding of equalities and life in modern Britain. It also provides pupils with careers information and guidance. Its delivery has been hampered by several factors, and due to its newness leaders have yet to establish the quality of this provision. Following the pandemic, leaders are beginning to create more opportunities to broaden pupils' cultural horizons and foster their talents and interests.

Staff are working with leaders to improve the school. Leaders are supportive and empathetic and there is a culture of togetherness across the centre. Governors understand their role and are holding leaders to account. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and well-being when making changes and staff appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders raise pupils' awareness of the risks they face. They ensure that staff complete regular training about local safeguarding issues. Leaders keep safeguarding at the forefront of the minds of all. This means that staff are alert to any sign that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff report all concerns, no matter how small. Leaders 'join the dots' promptly and act swiftly and effectively. They seek the help of other agencies when appropriate and are tenacious in following up any referrals. This means that pupils get the help they need. Leaders ensure staff are vetted appropriately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not clearly identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn, and the previous knowledge that they need to draw on. This means that pupils try and build new learning without having the essential knowledge that they need securely in place. Leaders should ensure that in all subjects, they identify and communicate clearly to teachers, the core knowledge that pupils will need to draw on readily in the future as they move through their learning journey.

- Leaders have not ensured that the implementation of the curriculum is consistently strong. They have not ensured that teachers consider pupils' starting points effectively. Consequently, teachers do not always accurately identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge or adapt their teaching to reshape explanations to maximise pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers employ effective strategies that are relevant to their subject to check pupils' prior knowledge so that they adapt their teaching to address the gaps in learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is a robust programme in place to support pupils who have significant gaps in their phonics knowledge. As a result, pupils who are at the early stages of reading are not getting the help they need to improve. Leaders should ensure that effective support is in place so that pupils who need support to improve their reading accuracy and fluency get the help they need.
- Leadership in several key areas in the school has undergone significant change. Leaders have a clear vision and have formulated plans to improve provision. However, these plans have yet to be realised and have the impact needed. Leaders should ensure that they follow through on their plans to strengthen provision in all areas of school life.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 134269 |
| Local authority | Coventry |
| Inspection number | 10227362 |
| 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 | 65 |
| Appropriate authority | Local authority |
| Chair | Philip Healey |
| Headteacher | Glenn Mellor |
| Website | www.coventry.gov.uk/elc |
| Date of previous inspection | 19 – 20 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Coventry Extended Learning Centre (CELC) is a pupil referral unit based across two centres in Coventry. Wyken ELC caters for key stage 3 pupils, and Herald ELC caters for key stage 4 pupils. The Herald ELC centre opened to pupils in April 2022.
- Pupils who attend the CELC have experienced disruption in their education. A significant number of pupils have been permanently excluded from other schools. Pupils regularly join the school throughout the academic year.
- Some pupils stay at CELC for just a few weeks before returning to mainstream school while others complete key stage 4 at the school.
- Some key stage 4 pupils complete up to two days of work related learning each week. They access these courses through the local authority work related learning team. At the time of the inspection, pupils were completing work related learning at seven different venues, all of which are unregistered.
- In May 2022, a new interim headteacher was appointed.
- The school has no religious character.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the interim headteacher, other senior and curriculum and pastoral leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for careers education.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the management committee and local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, art and geography. For each of these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to a staff survey.
- An inspector spent time talking to school leaders that coordinate the work-related learning programme and visited one of the providers.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Edgerton

Ofsted Inspector

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