

Corley Academy

Address: Church Lane, Corley, Coventry, West Midlands, CV7 8AZ

Unique reference number (URN): 149424

Inspection report: 20 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

The importance of high attendance is a constant mantra. Leaders have an accurate understanding of attendance patterns and take a proactive, pupil-centred approach to reducing absence. Regular attendance is a challenge for some pupils due to the complexity of their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to reduce pupils' barriers to attendance. For instance, transitions into school and between phases are thoughtfully managed to reduce anxiety. As a result of leaders' systematic implementation of rigorous processes, attendance is improving. There has been a notable improvement in the last 3 years, from below to above national averages for pupils with SEND.

Through a consistent approach and well-understood, high expectations, leaders have established a highly positive culture. Pupils flourish in both their attitudes to learning and their behaviour. Carefully planned adaptations, such as sensory breaks and flexible approaches to rewards and consequences, help pupils to engage positively. Staff have a secure understanding of pupils' complex social, emotional and behavioural needs. This enables them to help pupils by using established strategies to reduce stress and support regulation. In lessons, pupils show pride in their work and are keen to talk about their learning. At unstructured times, including lunchtime, pupils are meaningfully engaged and highly respectful towards one another. School is calm, happy and a place where poor behaviour or unkindness are extremely rare.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff know pupils very well. They demonstrate a detailed understanding of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Rigorous, continuous checks on pupils' development ensure that staff's knowledge of pupils' needs is current, accurate and used purposefully to shape provision. Pupils' emerging or changing needs are identified quickly. This depth of understanding, underpinned by high ambition, consistently reduces the barriers pupils face.

Adaptations for pupils with autism are a significant strength. They are fully embedded across the school because leaders ensure staff are well informed and knowledgeable. This expertise has been recognised by external bodies and the school shares good practice across the trust and beyond. Carefully chosen, often subtle adjustments, such as weighted cutlery, partitioned plates and flexible use of sensory spaces, enable pupils to access learning, feel secure and develop independence.

Admission and transition processes are rigorous, pupil-centred and informed by all stakeholders. Leaders ensure pupils follow the most appropriate curriculum pathway and can access learning suitably. For a small number of pupils, leaders commission alternative provision appropriately to provide bespoke opportunities, always in pupils' best interests.

There is a strong sense that pupils belong and are valued. Staff celebrate pupils' interests and individuality, enabling pupils to be their authentic selves and to thrive emotionally and

socially. For disadvantaged pupils, the school uses additional funding effectively to provide timely and considered support.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Pupils benefit from a wide range of carefully planned opportunities that enrich their experiences and support their personal development and wellbeing. Personal development is fully integrated into daily practice and underpins the strong understanding leaders and staff have of pupils' needs, aspirations and views. Leaders identify and anticipate pupils' pastoral needs systematically. They set up highly effective, targeted support for individuals and groups.

Preparation for adulthood and future pathways is a clear strength. Pupils access a broad and well-chosen range of workplace experiences, education and training providers. Careers guidance is carefully tailored to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes regular employability sessions, access to an independent careers adviser and meaningful real-world experiences, particularly for students in the post-16 provision.

Personal, social, health and economic education is a central aspect of the school curriculum. It equips pupils with essential knowledge to stay safe and healthy, both emotionally and physically. This includes managing online risks and understanding positive relationships. Pupils learn about initiatives such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This develops their knowledge of rights, responsibilities, equality and fairness, and results in respectful and tolerant attitudes. Pupils demonstrate secure understanding of characteristics that are protected against discrimination, such as race, gender and disability. Fundamental British values such as democracy and mutual respect are carefully woven through many aspects of school life.

Leaders engage with the wider community to impact on pupils' wider experiences. Strong partnerships with employers support successful work experience placements as well as routes into employment. A wide range of clubs and activities is available, enabling pupils to develop skills in languages, engineering and cooking. The menu of enrichment activities is shaped by pupil voice. This leads to high participation and positive outcomes. Through these activities, pupils increase their confidence, interests and potential career aspirations.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils learn and retain the planned curriculum and are generally well prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment. The key knowledge and skills pupils need are largely secure. However, minor inconsistencies in how teaching across the curriculum helps pupils to hone their key writing skills mean that pupils' written work is sometimes not as accurate as it could be.

Many pupils achieve success in a broad range of GCSEs and other accredited qualifications. Leaders demonstrate flexibility by ensuring that pupils' individual talents and

interests are recognised. This includes offering qualifications for subjects studied by small numbers of pupils where appropriate.

Leaders identify pupils who require additional help and intervene promptly. As a result, pupils make expected progress from their starting points across subjects, year groups and key stages. Pupils with a range of vulnerabilities receive effective support that reduces barriers to learning and supports them to achieve academically and in their personal development.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of education provided. They ensure the curriculum, including in the post-16 provision, is well organised, suitable for pupils' needs and generally taught well. Leaders are aware of a small number of minor inconsistencies in teaching. These include, for instance, how teachers support pupils to practise and develop important knowledge and skills in reading and writing across the curriculum.

The curriculum is ambitious and reflects leaders' clear commitment to providing pupils with opportunities to gain qualifications and prepare for adulthood. Leaders are responsive to the needs, interests and talents of pupils when offering qualifications. They often introduce courses to meet the needs or interests of a single or small group of pupils.

Pupils follow either the 'core' or 'life-skills' pathways, with flexibility to access both where appropriate. This ensures there is no ceiling on their learning. The curriculum is suitably sequenced across subjects. Personal, social, health and economic education is a strength. Time is deliberately allocated to it to ensure pupils develop a strong understanding of how to stay safe, healthy and prepared for later life.

Adjustments for pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities are well embedded and very effective. Staff understand pupils' barriers to engaging with learning and skilfully help pupils to overcome them. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. They present information clearly and in ways that suit pupils' individual needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's context and ensure pupils are at the centre of all decisions. They systematically review feedback from staff, pupils and families, and they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. There is an impressive, open culture of reflection and improvement. Where leaders identify areas for development, they take timely and effective action.

Staff receive extensive training and support, which they see as having real value and relevance to their roles. Training for supporting pupils with autism has been highly successful and levels of expertise across the school are impressive. However, there are some minor inconsistencies in how well staff have been trained to develop pupils' key knowledge and skills, including in writing. This means that pupils' work is not as consistently high quality as it could be.

Relationships across the school are a significant strength, reflected in positive staff morale and high retention. Staff wellbeing is central to the school's culture, which is characterised by mutual respect and a shared passion for securing the best outcomes possible for pupils.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties. Governors, trustees and trust leaders provide increasingly effective support and challenge. For example, they have enhanced how they share information and oversee provision. Governors are highly committed and passionate about the school. The trust's ongoing quality assurance checks add strength to the process of school improvement.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the post-16 cohort. They recognise that students' increasingly complex needs mean that continual refining of provision and the curriculum is required. They analyse academic and pastoral information carefully, ensuring appropriate support is put in place in a timely manner.

The curriculum is generally well designed and ambitious. It is responsive to students' needs, ambitions and interests. Leaders know there are some areas of slight inconsistency, such as the development of students' key reading and writing skills. This is reflected in some students' work.

Staff are passionate about securing the best outcomes for students. They present learning clearly and inclusively, ensuring all students are able to access the curriculum fully. Students generally achieve well from their starting points. They work towards a range of meaningful academic and vocational qualifications and experiences. These are chosen carefully to help prepare students for future learning, employment or training. For example, all students visit work placements for 2 days a week. They are accompanied by school staff to ensure they feel secure and able to thrive.

Students in the post-16 provision continue to benefit from a range of enrichment activities. Their personal and social development remains a priority.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

To be a pupil at Corley Academy is to know you belong, are valued and heard. Pupils appreciate how they are treated as individuals who are allowed to be themselves. They are understandably proud of their school.

Leaders and staff know pupils very well and demonstrate a deep understanding of each pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This knowledge is consistently applied across all aspects of school life, ensuring that pupils' SEND needs are fully considered in everything that happens. As a result, pupils are able to access and benefit from the full range of learning, enrichment activities and experiences on offer. These include all manner of exciting activities, including using the gym, growing food on the allotment or becoming racing drivers in the school go-karts.

Pupils' academic success, personal development and preparation for life are at the forefront of leaders' and governors' minds. The culture at the school is overwhelmingly supportive and welcoming. Relationships between pupils and staff are highly positive, warm and respectful. Pupils love coming to school, engaging in learning and being part of a community that enables them to thrive. Pupils take advantage of the increasingly broad range of qualifications the school offers. They are attending more regularly, work hard and generally achieve well across the curriculum.

Behaviour is highly positive. Pupils are thoughtful towards each other and accepting of difference. They feel and are safe in the highly inclusive learning environment. Bullying and poor behaviour are rare. If either happens, pupils are absolutely confident that their trusted members of staff will support them straight away.

Pupil voice is key to the direction of travel for the school. Whether they are interviewing prospective staff, offering suggestions for the curriculum or attending 'the Baraza' or community council to share their views, pupils make a genuine, tangible difference to their school.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen how teachers develop pupils' foundational knowledge and skills, including in writing and at the earlier stages of learning to read, to enable pupils to improve the quality of their work across the curriculum.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of Thrive Education Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Richard Chapman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lucy Bennett.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, trust representatives, including the CEO, and the chairs of the local governing body and trust board during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school caters for pupils with autism as well as other co-existing special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

The headteacher took up post in 2021.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The school converted to become an academy in 2022. The predecessor school, Corley Centre, was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2017.

Headteacher: Mr Mark White

Lead inspector:

Gareth Morgan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Pete Hines OBE, Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Wells, Ofsted Inspector

Ellen Taylor, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

162

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

School capacity

160

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

47.68%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

100.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school
2022 leavers (revised)	86%

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school
2024/25 (2 term)	9.8%
2023/24 (3 term)	12.1%
2022/23 (3 term)	16.3%

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school
2024/25 (2 term)	30.3%

Year	This school
2023/24 (3 term)	31.4%
2022/23 (3 term)	31.5%

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright