

The Collegiate Centre for Values Education for Life

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Mary Hinds

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.

Information about the school

The Collegiate Centre for Values Education for Life was opened in April 2000. It is a small independent special school providing education for students aged 11-17 years. There are currently 33 students on roll, of which 27 attend full-time and six attend part-time. They have been placed here by a range of other providers to ensure that they continue to access education. Just over two thirds of students have a statement of special educational needs for emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. However, the school is increasingly admitting students with more complex special needs. Almost all students have been permanently excluded or withdrawn from their previous school or educational provision. A third of students are looked after children. The school aims to develop students' self-confidence and emotional maturity so that they are able to succeed in their learning and to be effective members of the school and wider community. The school was last inspected in 2009.

Evaluation of the school

The Collegiate Centre for Values Education for Life provides a good quality of education; it successfully meets its aims. The school has improved since its last inspection and meets all independent school regulations. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their lives as a result of highly effective personal, social and health education (PSHE) and well-tailored academic programmes. They make rapid gains in their personal development and outstanding progress in their behaviour. The good curriculum, effective teaching and accurate assessments ensure that all students learn effectively. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are good and meet requirements

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and is carefully adapted to suit the needs of all students. It also ensures that all the requirements of statements of special educational needs are fully met. Based on the National Curriculum, it is well constructed so that it has a positive impact on students' good academic progress and their outstanding personal development

All students follow accredited courses either at GCSE and/or entry level. The school offers a wide range of subjects for students to study at both levels. Options at GCSE include mathematics, English (literature and language), art, information and communication technology (ICT), humanities and a PSHE accredited course 'Preparation for Working Life'. There is a similar choice of subjects at entry level. In

2011 almost all students successfully achieved at least one GCSE and most achieved two or more. Less-able students gained entry level in several subjects, and all students made good progress in the basic skills from their low starting points. Projected results for 2012 indicate that over half of students will achieve a GCSE in English, and most will achieve a GCSE in mathematics.

Recent curriculum innovations have yet to impact fully on accelerating student progress further. Nevertheless they are securing greater student motivation and independent learning. The school is becoming more adept at integrating subjects through project work. Students have opportunities to use and apply basic skills, including ICT to undertake research. For example, students worked collaboratively on a local community-based project 'Birmingham canal life and mines', ensuring that learning was within a real life context. PSHE and citizenship are the strongest subjects in the school. As well as comprehensive accredited PSHE programmes, students participate fully in the organisation of the school. Regular whole school meetings and structured committees such as the 'Values committee', provide students with opportunities to discuss and make decisions about their own learning. There are many extra-curricular activities for example, trips to museums, art galleries, as well as a boxing club called 'Fight for Change' run by a charity which provide mentors and coaches to inspire the students to achieve their full potential.

Students, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress as a result of good teaching and assessment. Recent teaching appointments have strengthened both the curriculum and the quality of teaching. There is a good range of expertise in a range of subjects. Some of the best planning is in art where there is clear progression of skills, knowledge and understanding, and identified assessment opportunities and key vocabulary. In the best lessons teachers use this and on-going assessments well to adjust activities not only in response to students' emotional needs, but also to their current levels of understanding. The level of challenge is adjusted within lessons as adults question students well and are highly sensitive to the needs of their students. Work is supported effectively by good resources which also provide effective structure for the students. This good practice is not yet shared routinely to improve the quality of teaching across the school.

Other key features of teaching include the baseline assessment system which, although fairly recent, is already adding accuracy and rigour. Students undergo a thorough four-week initial assessment period to ensure that individual educational and personal plans are well focused. Adults support students' learning well. They are skilled in encouraging students to assess and grade their attitudes, effort, attendance, punctuality and behaviour at the end of every lesson. Subsequent evaluations develop students' self awareness and ability to reflect. Points from this evaluation provide direct feedback of student performance and are then used to celebrate success through certificates, as well as informing termly reports for students and their parents and carers. Regular assessment shows how well students are progressing against National Curriculum levels and in their Key Stage 4 courses. However, when setting targets, the school does not cross reference to national attainment data and progression guidance, and does not therefore always know if individual targets are sufficiently challenging.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In particular, the impact of the school's influence and strategies to secure outstanding behaviour and attitudes is exceptional. Almost always, students respond positively to adults' management of behaviour through their excellent support and guidance. When students very occasionally refuse to engage in their learning and/or conform to expectations, staff are skilled in using non-confrontational approaches via sensitive but assertive strategies to successfully re-engage pupils quickly. Staff are positive role models and have high expectations for the completion of work in lessons and high expectations for behaviour. Every classroom displays what constitutes effective and acceptable behaviour. This, together with time and discussion to reflect about students' actions, develops their understanding of right and wrong and consequences of their behaviour. The school's clear set of values provides a solid foundation for students to develop inner control to influence their behaviour towards themselves and others. Trust and respect between students and staff enhances their social and moral development significantly.

Opportunities to celebrate individual strengths in lessons enhance students' confidence and self-esteem very well. Students also have opportunities to be mediators, to make decisions and to apply reason in conflict situations in their roles as members of the 'Fairness committee' and 'Disciplinary committee' alongside staff. By seeking to defuse conflicts, students flourish and believe in their own capabilities; as one student says 'Everyone leaves here completely different. I can deal with all sorts of pressure now'. The school is a highly cohesive community where all students get on exceptionally well together. As a consequence, attendance is good as students enjoy school and attend regularly.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Students report that they feel safe and secure in school. There are high levels of supervision in school and good risk assessments for visits outside the school. Arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students, including appropriate checks made on staff and child protection training for all staff, meet requirements. All policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of students, such as those relating to child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, and fire safety, are implemented fully. All the appropriate fire procedures and risk assessments are completed. The school has a suitable three-year accessibility plan which meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school's safer recruitment and staff vetting procedures are robust. These policies and arrangements ensure that all staff and others are suitable to work with students. The single central register meets regulatory requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The accommodation provides a safe and effective environment for learning. There are designated classrooms for mathematics, English, science, ICT and a library. All classrooms are spacious, clean and well-organised. Students regularly monitor the learning environment with a designated member of staff to ensure that all areas of the school are well maintained. The outdoor area, while it meets regulatory requirements, has limited space for recreation and leisure. However the school makes good use of the local sports centre and park where students are able to play football and other games.

Provision of information

The school has very effective partnerships with parents, carers, external professionals and local authorities. Parents and carers are kept well-informed about the school through the school prospectus or via the website. Termly reports are detailed and provide parents and carers with clear information about their children's academic progress, attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clear complaints procedure which fully meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- make better use of national data and guidance to ensure that challenging targets are always set to accelerate progress further
- use the existing good practice in teaching, particularly in art, to secure consistently good or better teaching throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
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How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Independent special school		
Date school opened	April 2000		
Age range of pupils	11-17 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 23	Girls: 4	Total: 27
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 2	Total: 6
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 20	Girls: 2	Total: 22
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 6	Girls: 4	Total: 10
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,650 to £38,985		
Address of school	51-54 Hockley Hill, Hockley, Birmingham, B18 5AQ		
Telephone number	0121 523 0222		
Email address	val.russell@vefl.org.uk		
Headteacher	Val Russell-Baker		
Proprietor	The Collegiate Centre for Values Education For Life		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 June 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of The Collegiate Centre for Values Education for Life,
Birmingham B18 5AQ**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school last week and especially to those of you who took the time to explain how you feel about your school. You all said very positive things about the staff, the school and how well you all get on together.

Your school provides a good quality of education and you excel in your personal development. You are very appreciative of what the school provides for you both academically and personally. Your attitudes to learning are excellent and most of you behave exceptionally well for most of the time. You learn and socialise in a very harmonious environment where you look out for one another. The teaching you receive is good and staff assess your learning well. This means that you all make good progress. However, your targets may not always be as challenging as they could be and I have asked your teachers to check that they are. I have also suggested that the good teaching and assessment in art could be used to make sure that teaching is good or better in all subjects.

Your dedicated staff are very proud of how hard you work, how you take responsibility for your own behaviour and how well you are making progress in your chosen subjects.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds
Lead inspector