



Head Teacher's Report to Education and children's social care overview and scrutiny committee

9th October 2019

Steve Howell

City of Birmingham School (COBS)

What we are

COBS is the Local Authority Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Our primary function is to educate pupils who have been permanently excluded from schools and have a Birmingham address.

In addition to this, we also provide education to a range of other pupils as part of permanent exclusion avoidance, in particular for children in care, school refuser pupils and a small number of pupils with EHCPs.

Finally, we have a traded Outreach service which works with around 150 schools per year.

Where we are

We have 8 centres situated around Birmingham:

Primary:	Ashbourne Centre	Erdington	40 places
	Marywood Centre	Ladywood	40 places
	Minerva Centre	Frankley	40 places
Secondary	Kings Centre	Erdington	84 places
	Link Centre	Small Heath	48 places
	Grove Centre	Baslsall Heath	37 places
	Firsbrook Centre	Quinton	37 places
	Millpool Centre	Kings Heath	37 places

In addition to this, we commission places in 3 alternative providers to provide around 60 places.

COBS in numbers

Phase	Places
Primary	120
Secondary Full Top-up	161
Secondary Part Top-up	151
School refuser	24
Remand	8
Total places	464

Although we have 464 places, due to the changing nature of our roll, this equates to around 800 – 900 pupils per year. Pupils join and leave throughout the year following exclusion and reintegration processes.

As with many PRUs across the country, we have been working at or beyond capacity for several years now, with an increased level of need from the pupils we are providing for as the following illustrates.

	No of places	No on roll	Y11	Y7-10	R-6	FSM	EHCP	LAC
Summer 2016	500	531	155	241	135	333 63%	30	
Autumn 2016	440	351	83	178	90	218 62%	19	
Spring 2017	440	441	115	225	101	248 58%	13	23
Spring 2018	490	523	108	278	127	350 66%	37	41
Summer 2019	464	481	121	231	129	339 70%	18	39

Progress and attainment

For some time our focus has been on improving the academic outcomes pupils achieve whilst attending COBS. This is in the context of an inspirational curriculum, steeped in rich life experiences and a culture of high expectations.

Pupils in KS4 all study Maths and English GCSEs. Many have the opportunity to study several GCSE subjects in addition including English literature, science, history, RE, photography and art. Pupils also have the opportunity to undertake vocational qualifications including health and social care, food and sport.

Pupils in KS3 broadly follow the national curriculum; this is supplemented with a range of work focussed on their personal and social development. Similarly, pupils in KS1 and 2 follow the national curriculum; we have a strong cross-curricular approach to teaching in primary and most of our teaching is delivered through half termly topics. Where pupils are able, we enter them for SATs - this is important as we want all of our pupils to have the same experiences as their peers.

Outlined below are our 2019 results. As demonstrated below, pupils make significant progress from their starting point during the time they are with us and are able to go on to further education, or back into mainstream, without being disadvantaged by exclusion.

Progress and attainment data 18 - 2019

Primary:

Pupil progress

%	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science
Ashbourne	82	89	79	58
Marywood	97	100	100	97
Minerva	97	96	95	84
Whole School	92	92	91	81

SATS Outcomes:

% of pupils Cohort of 36 - 39	Working Below 'B'	Entered but working below expected standard	Exp/+	GDS	Abs
Reading	39	45	11	8	5
SPAG	38	56	0	0	6
Maths	33	55	6	0	6

Secondary:**Pupil Progress**

%	English	Maths	Science
Kings	79	65	85
Grove	62	77	58
Link	90	78	83
Millpool	68	75	75
Firsbrook	74	60	60
Whole School	77	82	83

GCSE results:**English Language**

Grade	% achieved
1	26
2	23
3	32
4	8
5	2
6	2
U	7

Maths

Grade	% Achieved
1	43
2	20
3	9
4	3
5	9
U	16

Biology**RE Long course**

Grade	% achieved
1	33
2	23
3	8
4	3
5	6
U	27

Grade	No. achieved
2	2
3	
4	1
5	1
6	1
7	1
8	1

RE – Short course**Other**

Grade	No. achieved
1	
2	2
3	2
4	
5	

Subject	GCSE grades achieved
Chemistry	5
Combined Science	2-2, 1-1
English Literature	3, 4
History	4
Art	3,2,2,2,1
Drama	1
Citizenship	3,1,4,1,4,2
Travel and Tourism	L1P X 4, L2P X 2

Attendance

Nationally, attendance in PRUs is below the national average in mainstream. Nationwide PRU attendance has been improving in recent years but is still only around 64%; secondary attendance is lower than primary.

At COBS we see the same pattern with our primary attendance sitting currently at 83% and our secondary at 62%. We have strong systems for tracking attendance and supporting and challenging families where attendance is poor. We employ directly 8 family support workers and also have support from the local authority through the Fasttrack legal system.

Where pupils have been disengaged for a long period of time from school we utilise a range of staff and programmes to reengage them with education.

Areas for improvement

We face a range of challenges as a school, some of which are briefly outlined below; we are in various stages of working with partners to overcome these barriers.

- Reintegration – Returning pupils to school successfully is one of the biggest challenges we face; there isn't a clear and consistent mechanism for achieving this across the city, although pockets of good practice exist, and there is limited capacity for supporting pupils to be successful
- Physical capacity – Our buildings are not all fit for purpose; some are too small and not well located. We do not have the capacity available to reduce the off-site provision that we use
- Location – Although we serve the entire city, our centres are not evenly spread. This results in some children travelling long distances to their nearest centre. This may not be an issue for many, but those pupils who are involved in gang related issues, for example, often refuse to travel and attendance becomes an issue
- Perception – Pupils, families and sometimes other agencies and professionals often have a negative perception of PRUs and this can cause some challenges in, for example, attendance

This document is a brief summary of COBS and our outcomes. It is by no means exhaustive and I am happy provide further information through questions if required.

Steve Howell

October 2019