

Tewkesbury School

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8DF

Inspection dates

3–4 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has driven significant improvements in the school since the last inspection.
- The curriculum is designed to suit pupils with different abilities and interests, so that pupils feel well supported and able to succeed.
- The quality of governance has improved and has supported the headteacher in challenging underperformance.
- The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 4 has risen significantly in recent years as a result of better teaching and improvements in pupils' attitudes to learning.
- The overall quality of teaching has improved because more is expected of pupils and they are challenged to produce their best work.
- Pupils are polite and considerate towards each other and staff. They behave well in lessons and around the school site.
- The school is friendly and welcoming, so that pupils and visitors feel comfortable and at ease around the school campus.
- Achievement of learners in the sixth form is rising because the director has introduced a culture of high aspiration and greater accountability.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some uninspiring teaching fails to enthuse pupils, so that their desire to take greater interest and to think more deeply is not always present.
- Systems to track the progress being made by pupils in Key Stage 3 are not yet fully secure.
- Oversight of certain areas of the school's work by leaders and governors has not been sharp enough, which has lessened the impact of some actions.
- The level of persistent absence is too high. Although the school is taking action, impact has been limited.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers use their expertise to inspire pupils, so that pupils are challenged to think and deepen their understanding
 - pupil progress information is accurate and reliable, especially in Key Stage 3, so that teachers have a better understanding of the improvements that individual pupils need to make and adapt teaching accordingly.
- Improve the quality of leadership by ensuring that:
 - leaders and governors have sufficient oversight of aspects of the school's work, particularly in respect of evaluating the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils and the impact of actions to reduce persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- This is a rapidly improving school. The headteacher has been a key factor in bringing about success as he has shown determination and commitment to make necessary changes. The headteacher is clear about the school's strengths and areas for development. He has been quick to tackle underperformance and has not shied away from taking difficult decisions.
- The headteacher has generated a culture of high expectation in the school that is shared by staff and pupils. As a result, systems and procedures to secure good teaching and behaviour have been tightened up and pupils have responded positively to these changes.
- As changes have been implemented, the headteacher has ensured that the school is open and outward-facing as an institution, responsive to parents, involved in the community and works closely with partners. In the online surveys, staff and parents reported that they were largely positive about the work of leaders, although some parents did express concerns about behaviour.
- Middle leadership is improving rapidly. Faculty and pastoral heads are now monitored more regularly and better held to account for the quality of teaching, behaviour and achievement of pupils.
- Leaders feel strongly that the curriculum should suit the abilities and interests of all pupils at the school. As a result, different curriculum pathways are available when pupils join the school, leading to a range of option choices at Key Stage 4 and also post-16. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities are popular with pupils and dovetail well with the main curriculum.
- Teaching is improving in the school, which is leading to stronger pupil outcomes. Leaders have successfully worked on raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do, improving the quality of questioning and using feedback to improve pupils' progress. However, some inconsistencies remain within and across subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported by pupil premium funding. Different academic and pastoral activities, such as extra English and mathematics tuition, homework club, music bursaries and free breakfast provision, all help to provide foundations for better learning for these pupils. As a result, pupils make progress that is at least in line with their peers. Leaders are less clear, however, which of the various activities have the most impact because they do not fully evaluate them.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy turning up each morning. They treat each other, staff and the school site respectfully. This is apparent in the calm, mature way that they move around the campus. The site is well looked after: it is clean, free of graffiti and largely litter-free. One pupil wryly reported that 'Mr Watson (headteacher) is obsessed with litter'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed in many ways: assemblies address a wide range of themes, such as mental health, and inspectors noted references to issues as diverse as the so-called 'bedroom tax', the Holocaust and the moral development of a literary character. A dedicated personal, social and health education programme, taught by specialists, teaches pupils about extremism, democracy, human rights, and how to make safe choices. This reinforces their understanding of British values and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has benefited from a range of external support, consisting of local schools, a school improvement partner and The Odyssey Teaching Alliance in Cheltenham. This support has helped to improve the mathematics faculty, aspects of middle leadership and the spending of pupil premium funding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has undergone significant change since the last inspection. It is now a body that ably supports and challenges the headteacher. The governing body has assisted the headteacher in swiftly tackling underperforming staff.
 - Governors use their experience and professionalism to hold the headteacher to account and are aware of the key strengths and weaknesses of the school. Nevertheless, governors need to sharpen and refine their understanding of the impact of certain areas of the school's work, such as the impact of pupil premium spending and the effectiveness of actions to reduce persistent absence.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, and are taken seriously by the school. Effective systems are in place to keep children safe, comprehensive up-to-date records are kept, and staff act quickly to address any issues that arise. School staff work well with a range of other external agencies to support pupils appropriately. This work is well promoted among pupils by assemblies and the personal, social and health programme, which helps pupils to be aware of their responsibility to make safe choices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved and is now good. Teaching is particularly strong in humanities, where a shared culture across this group of subjects has the highest expectations of pupils. This is also the case in English, where high expectations have led to very strong outcomes for pupils at Key Stage 4.
- Middle leaders are now monitoring the quality of teaching and learning more effectively and, as a result, teachers feel that they are held more to account for the learning and progress of their pupils. Monitoring mechanisms are tied to the formal management of teachers' performance and this has led to an improvement in teaching quality across the curriculum.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in their lessons. They are quick to settle to task and work studiously without distracting each other. They respond well to direction from staff and hardly any disruption was seen by inspectors. Pupils are punctual to lessons, have the right equipment and are ready to learn.
- To some extent, teachers have tailored their teaching to the abilities of pupils through the use of the 'gold, silver and bronze' system. This enables teachers to adapt work in three different ways to suit pupils. Although this works for some pupils, it limits what others might achieve because they are not fully stretched. The best teaching inspires pupils, captures their interest and encourages them to think more deeply.
- Where questioning is used effectively, it draws pupils into the learning. The best questioning observed by inspectors was open and provocative, allowing pupils to imagine, explore and express an opinion. Questioning of this nature engaged other members of the class, such as the level of interest. This was apparent in an English lesson where pupils were encouraged to share their views about the character of Mr Birling from J.B. Priestley's play, 'An Inspector Calls'. In response to one pupil who made a contribution, the teacher was not satisfied because there was little textual evidence for the answer and, in the nicest possible way, prompted the pupil to consider carefully and more deeply. The pupil went on to develop a more accurate, meaningful answer as a result.
- In accordance with the school's policy, where teachers provide useful feedback to pupils about their work, and pupils are encouraged to respond in order to firm up their understanding, pupils report that they find this helpful and that they make more progress as a result. However, the quality of feedback is still an area of inconsistency across the curriculum.
- Some teaching in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 4, provides pupils with a more restricted understanding of mathematics and a narrow focus on methods and techniques, which pupils do not understand well enough to be able to adapt, extend or apply confidently in a range of situations. Teachers are developing their skills in introducing deeper thinking and problem solving, particularly in Key Stage 3, although more work is needed to secure this approach throughout the subject. Implementation is in its very early stages.
- Teaching assistants are used to good effect in the school: pupils who most need support receive a high degree of personal attention that allows them to access the teaching, develop their learning and make progress.
- The information that teachers use to gauge the progress that pupils are making, particularly in Key Stage 3, is not always accurate or reliable. This means that teachers are not always clear about what pupils can or cannot do and the rate at which they are acquiring skills or knowledge. Leaders are taking steps to address the issue.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, pleasant and articulate individuals. They are polite and welcoming to visitors, say 'good morning' and allow others to go through doors first. They are comfortable and relaxed in the presence of each other and adults.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe because they understand the dangers posed by the internet, extremist thinking and those who would exploit children. Through tutorial sessions, assemblies and the personal, social and health programme, pupils are provided with the opportunity to explore and debate a variety of issues in detail. Pupils are more confident and secure in their well-being as a result.
- Pupils report that there is little bullying in the school and that when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly

and effectively by school staff.

- Pupils receive effective careers guidance so that they are able to make appropriate decisions about what to do when they finish school. This work starts in Year 8, and pupils report that the advice they receive is impartial. The school places a high priority on work experience and there is a strong programme of work-related learning in the curriculum. Some of the most-able pupils participate in an outreach programme at the University of Gloucestershire to encourage these pupils to have aspirations for higher education.
- Teachers do not accept derogatory or homophobic language and are quick to tackle it. However, pupils reported that swearing does occur when staff are not around or are out of earshot. Pupils are not always aware that homophobic language is never acceptable, even if it is considered to be 'banter'.
- The 12 pupils who receive alternative provision at Abbey View receive good pastoral care and are making progress in their personal development and behaviour.
- Pupils report that they feel safer as a result of recent improvements to site security, namely the erection of a new perimeter fence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils themselves report that behaviour is now much better than it used to be, although only 72% of parents who completed the online questionnaire agree that behaviour is good. Inspectors observed little poor behaviour during the course of the inspection.
- In lessons, pupils are cooperative, settle to work quickly and do not distract each other from their studies. When working in pairs or groups, they discuss quietly in a calm, mature way. During wider class discussion, pupils listen to each other without interrupting or speaking over one another.
- Many pupils appreciate that they are ambassadors for their school. As a result, they are smartly presented and wear their uniform well. For many pupils, this is reflected in the presentation of their work, which is neat, legible and clearly laid out.
- Pupils with behavioural needs and those who struggle to cope with aspects of school life are well supported by the Teaching and Learning Centre. Pupils are known as individuals and provided with caring support so that they can thrive. As a result, internal exclusions have significantly declined.
- Levels of absence have reduced over time so that attendance now compares well with the national average. Persistent absence has also fallen over the last three years for most pupils. However, persistent absence is still too high for some pupils who are disadvantaged and who have special educational needs or disability. Although leaders are aware of the issue and have taken action to deal with it, impact is still limited in the case of these specific pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils have risen significantly since the time of the last inspection. Attainment in English and mathematics in 2015 was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE was also well above average.
- The progress made by pupils was also strong in 2015 for English, science and humanities, while other subjects were in line with the national average.
- The school's own information indicates that good progress is being made by current pupils in most subjects. The large majority of current Year 11 pupils have already achieved at least a grade C in English.
- The progress of pupils in humanities subjects has been consistently strong over time so that they repeatedly make more progress than other pupils nationally. These outcomes reflect the culture of high aspiration and quality of work produced in the faculty.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils was not as strong as that made by their peers in 2015, but outcomes for these pupils are improving over time. Gaps are closing between pupils who are disadvantaged and those who are not, and are now in line with the national average. The gap has not narrowed more swiftly, in part because achievement has been rising steadily for all.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making good progress as a result of the support they receive. The coordinator for disabilities and special needs knows these pupils well. She understands what they require to succeed and closely monitors their progress.
- Boys and girls achieve equally well in this school. All pupils, regardless of gender, are encouraged to succeed; teachers plan and manage their lessons in such a way that boys and girls are able to make a strong contribution to their learning.
- The most-able pupils make the progress expected of them. In English, they make more progress than

other similar pupils nationally. Leaders have laid good foundations for the most-able pupils to succeed by establishing the 'Extension Curriculum' in Key Stage 3. This curriculum enhances the skills and depth of knowledge needed for the most-able pupils to meet their potential.

- Achievement in mathematics, although improving, is not yet as strong as it is in English. This is due, in large part, to recent staffing changes. Leaders have not been slow to tackle the issue, however, and inspection evidence confirms that the work of the newly appointed faculty leader, supported by senior leaders, is bearing fruit.
- The small number of pupils in Year 7 who require additional mathematics and English tuition receive good support. As a result, these pupils are able to participate more fully in the curriculum when they move to older year groups. One pupil commented that the support 'helps us to get better at the things we're not very good at'.
- Pupils in alternative provision achieve good outcomes because of the support they receive. As a result of this support, pupils are increasingly confident, socially adept and more highly skilled.
- Pupils and learners are well prepared for life after school. Nearly all pupils go on to further education so that there are no pupils who are not in education, training or employment.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Overall levels of achievement in the sixth form have risen since the last inspection. In most subjects, learners make good progress. For example, in the examinations in 2015, progress was particularly strong in economics and business studies.
- The director of the sixth form leads with great energy and determination, developing many new ideas and initiatives that are having a positive impact. There is a strong 'family' ethos to the sixth form, which is cultivated through leaders' close focus and understanding of the needs of individual learners.
- Leaders in the sixth form have had considerable impact in strengthening systems and processes to manage the sixth form effectively, so that it has improved since the last inspection. They have a broadly accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form, although their understanding of specific features of teaching is not as detailed.
- Information about learners' targets and progress is collected frequently and the information is used to pinpoint where some learners need extra help, support or challenge to succeed. Leaders have increased how often they report to parents, and this is regular and useful. Indeed, a particular strength of the sixth form, despite its relatively larger size, is the way in which learners are known as individuals by staff. Staff and leaders are tenacious in ensuring that learners are helped to overcome any difficulties so that they can achieve well.
- Progress is strongest where teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality of learners' work and their contributions in lessons. Learning is better because learners are encouraged to develop their ideas and deepen their thinking. Learners use time outside lessons effectively to consolidate learning or to undertake tasks and research in preparation for the lesson to come. Learners in Year 13 particularly identified this as a strength of the best teaching, and as an approach that developed their skills usefully for future study.
- Where progress is not as strong, the quality of teaching and the impact of assessment are weaker. There remains some variation in the quality of teaching across the sixth form. Learners make slower progress in a small number of minority subjects such as some vocational courses. Leaders are developing an understanding of the features of effective teaching in the sixth form and are taking action to address these concerns.
- Leaders now have greater confidence in the accuracy and reliability of assessment information, although this is not yet universally the case across all subjects, particularly in Year 12, where there are sometimes disparities between learners' current achievement, their target grades and their final performance.
- There is a strong focus on learners' regular attendance in the sixth form. Leaders have secured an improved ethos and culture of aspiration and achievement. Levels of attendance have improved since the previous inspection, although leaders do not routinely evaluate trends of attendance by group. However, an effective focus on the needs of individual learners' attendance is bringing about overall improvement.
- In many lessons, learners receive high-quality feedback that helps them to reflect effectively on their learning and make faster progress. Feedback of this quality is not yet a consistently strong feature throughout the sixth form.
- The achievement of disadvantaged learners is improving, as is their retention on the courses they begin. Learners say that most of the teaching they receive helps them to make good progress.
- The sixth form meets the requirements of the 16–19 study programmes. It offers a wide range of

academic courses, supplemented by a smaller number of vocational or applied GCE courses. Learners who need to resit English or mathematics are adequately catered for.

- Learners feel that there are adults they can talk to about concerns they may have with their studies, or their health and well-being, including issues to do with mental health. Learners understand well the risks to their health, including aspects affecting young people of their age group, such as driving safely.
- Almost all learners move on to positive destinations when they leave the sixth form. Around half of learners go on to university, and approximately 20% go to the stronger Russell Group universities, a figure which exceeds the rate nationally.

School details

Unique reference number	137752
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10002523

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1420
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Hawkins
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Gary Watson
Telephone number	01684 292152
Website	www.tewkesburyschool.org
Email address	office@tewkesburyschool.org
Date of previous inspection	26–27 November 2014

Information about this school

- Tewkesbury School is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- The current headteacher took up post in 2013.
- There have been many changes to the governing body since the last inspection.
- The school has informal links with a number of other schools, including schools in Cheltenham and Gloucester.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability who receive support is well below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability who have a statement or education, health and care plan is above average.
- Twelve pupils attend alternative provision at Abbey View in the centre of Tewkesbury.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 44 lessons, 30 of which were jointly conducted with leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, groups of pupils and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour and the safeguarding of students.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 140 responses to the online Parent View survey and 55 staff questionnaire returns.
- Inspectors also visited Abbey View, the off-site alternative provision.

Inspection team

Stephen Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lee Northern	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Massey	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Non Davies	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

