

The Telford Langley School

Duce Drive, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire TF4 3JS

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils overall and other groups, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is too low. Although the differences between their achievement and others nationally are now showing strong improvement, this was not the case until the current year.
- Teaching overall is not yet having a sufficiently strong impact on pupils' learning to ensure all make the progress they are capable of, given their starting points. The quality of teachers' questioning, the level of challenge in some lessons, and the effectiveness of a few teachers' skill in managing their classes are not yet consistently good.
- The revised curriculum, for example in relation to the English baccalaureate, is not yet having a positive enough impact on pupils' progress.
- Middle leadership in some subject areas is not as strong as the best in the school. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making in some subject areas are not improving as rapidly as in other subjects.
- The attendance of a minority of pupils is too low and persistent absence is too high. Pupils' poor attendance has a negative impact on their learning and their ability to make progress.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions is now falling, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. However, fixed-term exclusions and the number of internal exclusions are high. The school's behaviour logs indicate that these are mainly due to low-level disruption. This reflects the fact that not enough pupils are taking responsibility for their own behaviour or demonstrating good attitudes to learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders are successfully developing a more aspirational culture, raising expectations and encouraging more respect and tolerance.
- Effective collaboration between leaders within the school, and across the trust, means that best practice is shared. This is having a positive impact on all aspects of the school.
- All policies and procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe are fully in place and effective. Pupils say they feel very safe in school.
- Governance of the school is strong. Members of the education advisory board have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what it needs to do to improve further.
- Across subjects, pupils are involved in regular self-assessment of their understanding of the topics they are studying. This is successfully encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and progress so that all pupils and groups of pupils achieve at least in line with national expectations given their starting points by:
 - sustaining the current rate of improvement evident for all pupils' attainment and progress
 - sustaining the current rate, as indicated by the school's own data, at which differences in attainment and progress between groups, in particular disadvantaged pupils, are diminishing.
- Extend the improvements that have been made to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently challenge pupils to achieve their potential
 - teachers' questioning skills are developed so that when questioning is used it has a greater impact on pupils' learning and is a more effective tool in supporting, extending and assessing learning
 - all teachers are able to manage pupils' behaviour effectively so that low-level disruption is rare and learning in all lessons becomes as effective as in the best.
- Ensure that all pupils attend regularly and have good attitudes to learning so that they can benefit fully from the education provided by the school by:
 - maintaining the clear focus on improving attendance and reducing exclusions for all pupils and for individual groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring all pupils take more responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the small number of relatively weaker subject leaders develop their leadership skills so that their impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subject areas matches that of the stronger subject leaders
 - fully embedding recent curriculum developments so that the impact on outcomes for all pupils and groups of pupils continues to improve.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his senior leadership team are having a significant impact on changing the culture of the school, raising expectations of staff and pupils, and encouraging respect and tolerance in the school. They have introduced effective systems to monitor and improve teaching, achievement, attendance and behaviour, all of which are having a positive impact on the school.
- Significant changes to staffing and the structure of the leadership team have taken place over the last year. Most leadership roles are across both this school and The Telford Park School. This well-designed strategy, introduced by the Community Academies Trust, enables leaders to share resources and expertise effectively across both schools. As a result, Telford Langley is now a more outward-looking school.
- The school has worked hard to overcome a legacy of too many supply or temporary staff by recruiting permanent, specialist staff, and by establishing a core group of supply teachers who are familiar with school practices, procedures and expectations.
- The school has good capacity to continue to improve. This is reflected in: the strong leadership team and the impact it has had already; the collaborative and open way in which leaders at all levels work together to promote the achievement and welfare of all of their pupils; and the high expectations of what leaders can achieve with well-judged support. The appropriate and productive challenge from the trust and the education advisory board further strengthens this capacity.
- More effective use of information about pupils' achievement, attendance, behaviour and exclusions means leaders are able to identify problem areas early and introduce appropriate strategies that have a prompt and effective impact. This has resulted in the improvements evident in all of these areas. However, the analysis of such data, especially in terms of individual groups of pupils, is not always as sharp as it might be in order to identify trends quickly.
- The review of pupil premium funding, required following the previous inspection, resulted in a well-targeted strategy of support and interventions for eligible pupils. This support is having a positive impact on current disadvantaged pupils' achievement and attendance, particularly at key stage 3. Leaders are aware that the differences that remain between this group and other pupils nationally are too wide and are working effectively to reduce these differences. School data about the expected achievement of current Year 10 and Year 11 pupils reflect this.
- The school's use of Year 7 catch-up funding is having a successful impact on improving eligible pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There has been a strong focus on improving the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils, particularly at key stage 3. As a result, there have been strong improvements, for example in reading ages for key stage 3 pupils. However, pupils' progress is not always tracked fully or consistently in every reading scheme used by the school. The focus on improving literacy has been less strong at key stage 4 because literacy interventions have been targeted specifically at key stage 3.
- Clear processes are in place to improve the quality of teaching, learning and

assessment. This involves good support and extensive professional development opportunities that are well matched to individual teachers' needs. This, together with more rigorous performance management, is helping to raise pupils' achievement.

- Leaders ensure that teachers comply with whole-school policies, for example the policies on assessment, and the focus on encouraging pupils to improve the presentation of their work. A range of information provided by the school, including in-year assessment data, indicates that the quality of teaching has improved substantially over time but is not yet good overall. Accurate assessment and predictions that match actual outcomes are the result of effective trust-wide moderation and verification processes.
- Overall, middle leadership is improving. Pastoral middle leadership is strong. Subject middle leadership is more variable because leadership in a few subjects is not yet as strong as in most. As a result, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making in some subject areas are not improving as rapidly as in other subjects. However, the strong support provided by operational leaders means that remaining weaknesses are being tackled effectively. The role of this additional layer of operational leaders is extending leadership opportunities available in the school and adding to leadership capacity.
- The curriculum and structure of the school day have undergone significant change since the last inspection. Curriculum plans, for example in relation to the English baccalaureate, still need to be fully embedded to have the impact intended on pupils' performance. Nevertheless, the current curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet pupils' needs and enable them to succeed according to their ability. The curriculum now includes a range of academic and vocational courses that increasingly stimulate pupils' interests and motivate them to work hard. In addition, a comprehensive intervention programme supports those who are falling behind or need additional help. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and suitable careers education, information and guidance ensure that pupils are prepared for their next steps after Year 11. Extra-curricular activities are varied and attendance at these is tracked to encourage pupils' personal development in a range of activities beyond their lessons.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is strong.
- Members of the education advisory board have clear expertise, and an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what is needed for its further improvement.
- Members challenge and support school leaders very well. Minutes of the board's meetings indicate that members regularly ask probing questions and request additional information as appropriate, for example about the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The board and the trust are highly regarded by staff at all levels in the school because of the positive impact they are having on all aspects of the school.
- The board has been instrumental in introducing a rigorous performance management system that ensures all staff are accountable for pupils' achievement and contribute to

whole-school priorities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders responsible for safeguarding have detailed knowledge of, and are proactive in ensuring that, all relevant policies and procedures are in place in order to keep pupils safe. This includes maintaining a keen eye on relevant local issues and risks and responding promptly to them. Regular audits take place to ensure all requirements are in place and there is a real sense that the school is open to scrutiny in this area. All staff have undertaken the required training and this has been followed up and carefully checked to ensure it is understood and embedded in practice. Curriculum provision contributes effectively to ensuring pupils develop appropriate knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This includes effective preparation for life in modern Britain and an understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The school's engagement with parents is increasingly effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because there is not yet sufficient consistency in the impact of strategies to improve teaching and learning on pupils' outcomes. Internal data and the school's own self-evaluation indicate that the impact of teaching over time on pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Challenge for pupils of different abilities is not always present and pupils are not always pushed to achieve as well as they are able. Where learning is weaker, when questioning pupils, teachers fail to use questioning effectively as a tool to assess, or to extend and deepen, pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result of existing weaknesses in teaching, there are still differences between the achievement of, for example, disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Teaching in science and languages has been weaker than in other subjects and this is reflected in pupils' achievement in these subjects. However, together with teaching overall, this is now improving.
- Pupils mostly follow teachers' instructions and are compliant so that lessons progress smoothly. However, low-level disruption occurs in a small number of lessons, and is reflected in the school's behaviour log records. This hinders the learning of the pupils involved and sometimes other pupils in these lessons. This is usually linked to either weaker teaching skills or less effective behaviour management skills. For example, behaviour is poorer when teachers set unrealistic deadlines for a piece of work to be finished; when they do not make absolutely clear what is required of pupils; when they are not swift or decisive enough in challenging low-level disruption; or when teachers are not providing sufficient pace, interest or structure in their lessons.
- Despite these weaker aspects of teaching, there is evidence of high-quality teaching in the school and of good practice. Most teachers manage behaviour in lessons very well. Most lessons provide suitable challenge to pupils of all abilities, and particularly for the most able pupils. Where learning is particularly strong, teachers use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to think deeply and to provide well thought-out and

complex responses, according to their abilities. Most lessons have a sense of purpose and most pupils show a clear sense of enjoyment and engagement. Pupils mostly work well together and listen respectfully to each other and to their teachers.

- Pupils' presentation in books is quite consistently neat and facilitates their learning. Pupils' books show convincing evidence of the progress they are making over time and, at key stage 3, they show improving literacy skills. Teachers focus effectively on developing literacy and numeracy skills particularly for lower-ability pupils. They prepare them well for assessment by, for example, teaching them strategies for tackling 'wordy' questions. Teaching assistants work well, and flexibly, with teachers to support pupils.
- Effective self-assessment by pupils both before studying a unit of work and on completion of it is a strong feature of learning that is common to most subjects at The Telford Langley School. Pupils speak highly of this process and describe how it helps them focus on their areas for improvement, and encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning and become more successful independent learners. This approach benefits from the fact that teachers are becoming more skilled in checking how well pupils are making progress, in providing pupils with effective strategies to check their own work and in providing pupils with work that is well matched to their individual abilities and needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most pupils value school and enjoy coming to school. The school takes all appropriate precautions to keep them safe and pupils say they feel safe in school. They say that staff take prompt action when any type of bullying is apparent.
- Much work is being done by staff to encourage the development of pupils' self-confidence, both academically and pastorally. Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for other pupils who face challenging circumstances, is having an increasingly positive impact on their academic and personal development. However, low attendance and occasional low-level disruption by some pupils mean that, overall, pupils' personal development and welfare is not yet good.
- Pupils rate the vertical tutoring system highly. Older pupils say it helps them take responsibility for younger pupils, and younger pupils value the support older pupils provide for them. Tutor periods are well ordered and purposeful, ensuring that wider pastoral and personal development curriculum issues, including literacy and numeracy, are given a strong focus.
- At the time of the inspection, no pupils were on alternative provision. However, over the last year, school information indicates that background checks were made about providers, and that the small number of pupils who have accessed this type of provision recently have attended appropriate provision, have been regularly monitored and have achieved success in the qualifications they have studied.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In 2016, attendance was low and persistent absence was high, in particular for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is now improving slowly, and for some groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, improvement is more rapid. However, attendance is still too low and not yet near to the national average for all pupils. Leaders describe pupils' low attendance as 'stubborn' and recognise that there are no quick fixes. The fact that it is improving is the result of a variety of successful interventions. These include the effective work of the educational welfare officer, regular meetings with relevant school leaders, rigorous attendance action plans and more targeted prosecutions.
- Internal exclusions as a result of the school's consequences system, although falling overall and for girls in particular, have increased for disadvantaged pupils over the last year. While this clearly reflects a more rigorous and consistent approach to behaviour management across the school, the proportion of pupils involved indicates that too many pupils are not taking enough responsibility for their own behaviour and not developing sufficiently positive attitudes to learning. This is reflected in the small number of lessons where low-level disruption was evident during the inspection.
- The school's records of fixed-term exclusions indicate that persistent disruption is a key reason. The number of fixed-term exclusions, including the incidence of repeat exclusions for individual pupils, is falling, and this is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Despite these negative aspects of behaviour in the school, overall pupils' behaviour around the school is calm and most pupils demonstrate a mature and respectful attitude to other pupils and to staff. They look smart and wear their uniforms with pride. Older pupils say that the more robust behaviour policy has had a positive impact on behaviour and that they are more able to learn because fewer lessons are now interrupted by low-level disruption. The use of derogatory language is not tolerated. Teachers deal with any instance of this by applying the appropriate consequence as well as educating pupils about why certain types of language are unacceptable.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils join the school with attainment on entry significantly below average. In 2016, most pupils did not make progress in line with expectations, given their starting points. The progress they made in English, mathematics, science and languages was significantly below average.
- In 2016, the overall progress made by disadvantaged pupils, and their progress in English and mathematics, was significantly below the national average of other pupils with similar starting points, particularly for lower- and middle-ability disadvantaged pupils. For pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress in English and in mathematics in 2016 was also significantly below the national average.
- The attainment of the most able pupils in 2016 improved with, for example, more gaining the highest grades at GCSE. The progress they made was broadly in line with the national average. The progress made by the most able disadvantaged pupils was

broadly in line with other pupils nationally, although the attainment of these pupils was below that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points.

- The overall outcomes for pupils in The Telford Langley School are affected significantly by a low stability rate, which means that approximately 15% of pupils are not educated in the school continually from Year 7 to Year 11. Leaders and staff are working hard to minimise the impact of this on pupils' outcomes and to ensure more pupils make the progress they are capable of. As a result, despite the below-average outcomes for pupils against national averages, there is evidence of improvement. Pupils' outcomes in 2016 showed improvement from 2015 across all headline measures and for almost all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Current school data indicates continuing improvement taking place, with particular strengths becoming apparent in mathematics, English, information and communication technology and computing, and business. The weakest subject areas are science and languages, although recent appointments mean that these areas are beginning to show improvement.
- School assessment data suggests that current Year 10 and Year 11 pupils will perform closer to the national average than previous cohorts. It also indicates that differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, in terms of both attainment and progress, are diminishing. Similarly improving data is available about the progress being made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The data indicates that this is the case in all subjects and, particularly at key stage 3. School data is reliable and has shown a close correlation between predictions and actual outcomes in each of the last two years.
- As a result of effective careers education, information, advice and guidance, the proportion of pupils going on to sustained education or training over recent years has shown a steady increase.

School details

Unique reference number	139766
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	10010477

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	635
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mr Bill McClements
Headteacher	Mr Steven Carter
Telephone number	01952 386700
Website	www.telfordlangleyschool.co.uk
Email address	steven.carter@taw.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school became an academy sponsored by the Community Academies Trust in September 2015. The chief executive officer of the trust is a national leader of education.
- The school has fewer pupils on roll than the national average for secondary schools.
- Approximately half of all pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than the national average.
- Approximately 14% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is about half the

national average.

- Approximately a third of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is much higher than the national average.
- The executive head of school is also the executive headteacher of both The Telford Langley School and The Telford Park School. Similarly, most other leaders, apart from pastoral middle leaders, have a role that involves oversight of their areas of responsibility at both The Telford Langley School and The Telford Park School.
- The education advisory board is responsible for the governance of the school. The same education advisory board also carries out the governance function at other schools in the trust, including The Telford Park School and The Telford Priory School.
- The Community Academies Trust provides the school with finance and human resource support and with specifically targeted school improvement support. In addition, the school receives support from, and provides support to, other schools in the trust as a result of the wide-ranging collaborative trust-wide sharing of good practice.
- At the time of the inspection, the school did not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- Provisional information about the school's 2016 Progress 8 result indicates that it meets the government's current floor standard.

Information about this inspection

- Parts of 23 lessons were observed, some jointly with senior leaders. In addition, an assembly and six tutor periods were visited. Inspectors heard a number of pupils read, including higher- and lower-ability pupils.
- Meetings were held with leaders at all levels, including those with pastoral and academic responsibilities. Discussions were held with the chief executive officer of the Community Academies Trust, who is a member of the education advisory board. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils from each key stage.
- School records on the quality of teaching, attendance, internal and external exclusions, and outcomes were scrutinised. A range of documents were reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation, minutes of the education advisory board and the headteacher's report to that body. Safeguarding policies and procedures, including staff's suitability to work with children, were checked.
- There were insufficient responses on Parent View, but the school's own parent surveys were reviewed.

Inspection team

Gwen Coates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dan Owen

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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