

KICKSTART

Telford College, Haybridge Road, Telford, Shropshire TF1 2NP

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's work are not fully developed. They do not give school leaders clear information that they can use to improve the school further.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Staff do not consistently plan to meet the needs of pupils with different starting points. Pupils are not regularly challenged to make good progress.
- Outcomes are not good. Over time, pupils have left Kickstart with too few accredited qualifications. Not enough pupils move on to education, employment or training when they leave the school.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and fundamental British values are not deeply embedded in the curriculum.
- Strategies to extend the curriculum, improve teaching, learning and assessment, enhance leadership and management and secure better outcomes for pupils through closer work with the college are not fully developed.
- Too many pupils have poor attendance.
- A much-higher proportion of pupils than the national average are excluded for verbal abuse to staff.
- Pupils do not always fully engage with their learning. They have not developed the characteristics of successful learners.
- Few pupils return to mainstream education from Kickstart.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving. The executive headteacher, supported by staff, the trust and those responsible for governance, is providing more effective strategic leadership. Expectations are higher.
- There is some good teaching in the school. The teaching of sport and art are particular strengths.
- Some individual pupils improve their behaviour, attendance and academic progress at Kickstart.
- Safeguarding is effective. Policies and practice have been brought in line with the college's procedures.
- The school works well with parents and carers.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school’s work so that they give school leaders clear information to improve the school further
 - fully developing links with the college in order to further improve the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment, aspects of leadership and management and outcomes for pupils
 - embedding SMSC and fundamental British values deeply within the curriculum.
- Improve pupils’ outcomes by ensuring that:
 - all teachers consistently plan to meet the needs of pupils with different starting points
 - staff set pupils activities that regularly challenge them to make good progress
 - pupils have more opportunities to achieve accredited qualifications
 - leaders work closely with the local authority to help more pupils return to mainstream education
 - more pupils move on to education, employment and training when they leave the school.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - taking immediate action to improve attendance
 - reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions for verbal abuse of staff
 - helping pupils develop the skills to become successful learners.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership over time has not secured good-quality teaching or outcomes in the school. The current leadership team is making improvements but new systems and structures are not fully embedded. Inconsistencies remain.
- Processes to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's work are underdeveloped. The leadership of teaching and learning has not secured the necessary improvements in practice, and systems to track pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance are not robust. These systems are beginning to improve and leaders are collecting more information about all aspects of the school's work. However, leaders do not yet analyse this in enough depth to inform subsequent developments.
- The executive headteacher has a clear understanding of Kickstart's strengths and weaknesses. He is using this insight to make improvements and plan further developments. Stronger links with the college are being used to help secure the necessary improvements. However, these are not yet fully developed and are yet to have a marked impact on all aspects of the school's work.
- The executive headteacher is providing clear strategic leadership. Staff and pupils now have higher expectations. Equality of opportunity is promoted well within a shared vision of raising aspirations for all.
- Staff are now benefiting from improved training and development opportunities with college staff. However, leaders acknowledge that the performance of staff was not managed well in the past and that many teachers and teaching assistants would benefit from observing good practice in other settings.
- The curriculum is improving as it now offers pupils wider learning opportunities. More pupils are experiencing taster sessions in the college and more subjects are now offered at GCSE level. Personal development is promoted well and the curriculum helps pupils to improve their behaviour. Personal safety, relationships and sex education, and different faiths and cultures are all covered well, but SMSC and fundamental British values are not embedded within the curriculum. Leaders are aware that the curriculum requires further development in order to fully meet the needs of all pupils.
- The school supports learning in the classroom through a range of enrichment opportunities. Pupils enjoy trips and visits to places of interest, including a residential visit to Wales. They also participate in a range of sporting, artistic and creative activities. As a result of a review of provision, fewer pupils now receive their education through alternative providers. Plans are in place to extend vocational learning in the school and through the college.
- Pupil premium funding is used more effectively now. Additional resources, staffing and cultural opportunities are leading to improved progress, behaviour and attendance for disadvantaged pupils. However, the evaluation of the impact of this funding is not fully developed.
- Staff work very well with parents. Through regular contact and termly events, parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education. Parents who made their views known during the inspection were very positive about the impact of the

school on their child's life. Comments from parents included: 'I can't praise this school and staff enough. My son is learning and his needs are taken in to consideration. He is excelling rather than being put in a corner and ignored or punished for struggling.'

- School leaders work well with the local authority but they have identified the need to provide further support to help pupils return to mainstream education. Currently, very few pupils return to mainstream settings from Kickstart.
- The trust now provides effective strategic leadership and direction for the school. Leaders are held to closer account and the appointment of the executive headteacher from the college has ensured that improvements that were being made from within Kickstart are built on. Support and challenge from the trust have improved in the last year.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by the board of trustees and, to a degree, the college corporation. Those responsible for governance have a wide range of skills and experience that they use to offer leaders appropriate support and challenge. Trustees have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they have taken effective action to improve the provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are clear safeguarding procedures within the school and leaders have ensured that staff are well trained. All staff care about the welfare of pupils and follow up concerns appropriately.
- Leaders understand their responsibilities and processes for reporting concerns are used effectively. Referrals are timely and appropriate action is taken when required. Leaders work productively with outside agencies to the benefit of pupils who may be at risk.
- The school's single central record is compliant and information is stored securely. Pupils are taught to stay safe in a range of situations. The curriculum is adapted to reflect local matters and current issues of concern. Pupils, staff and parents correctly believe that pupils are safe in the school.
- Appropriate policies and practice have been updated and brought in line with the college's procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inconsistent. There is evidence of good teaching but the quality varies between subjects.
- Where teaching is less effective, staff do not plan activities that allow pupils to make good progress from their different starting points. Staff do not use lesson time productively or routinely challenge pupils to fill gaps in their knowledge. Where aspirations are not high enough, pupils make slower progress.
- Too often, pupils are not set difficult activities that make them think carefully about what they are learning. In many subjects, all pupils usually complete the same tasks,

so activities are too easy for the most able pupils. This slows down the progress that pupils make.

- Frequently, pupils are unclear about the purpose of their learning and leaders acknowledge that technology is underused in lessons. This leads to some pupils not fully engaging with their learning. Positive relationships and high staffing ratios are not used consistently well to promote good progress.
- All staff attempt to ensure that pupils' effort is recognised and promote positive attitudes towards learning. Staff follow the school's marking policy and regularly give encouraging feedback. However, advice on how to improve is rarely challenging and often not followed up. This means that pupils have little incentive to improve their work.
- Leaders are aware that initial assessment information is not robust and that too many staff do not use information about prior learning to inform their planning. Consequently, plans are in place to use the college's processes to improve this aspect of the school's work.
- The school is a positive learning environment. High-quality well-kept displays celebrate pupils' achievements and are used to aid learning. There is some very good artwork on display.
- All staff work well together. Teaching assistants are usually deployed to support individuals effectively and many help a number of pupils focus on their learning. Some provide very high-quality support.
- Where teaching and learning are most effective, they are carefully planned to provide challenge for pupils with different starting points. Staff have high expectations and use questions and their subject knowledge well to deepen pupils' understanding. Activities interest pupils and speed up the progress that they make.
- Literacy and numeracy are promoted effectively across the curriculum. Pupils are also actively encouraged to develop their communication skills in most lessons. Homework is set in line with the school's policy.
- Through their quality assurance process, leaders identified that the quality of teaching at many alternative providers did not meet the needs of the pupils. As a result, very few pupils now attend off-site provision.
- The school regularly gives parents clear information about their child's academic studies and attendance. Leaders are currently developing the reporting process so that it gives parents and pupils clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve in each subject.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement. Pupils who attend regularly receive effective personalised support but too many have not developed the characteristics of successful learners. There are instances of pupils not engaging fully with their studies or waiting for staff to support them rather than

trying to overcome difficulties themselves. This slows down their learning.

- Staff know the pupils well. They take opportunities to build pupils' self-confidence within a calm and supportive environment. Pupils feel that staff listen to them. They trust the adults in the school to help them to overcome any difficulties that they may encounter.
- Staff promote pupils' physical and emotional well-being effectively. Pupils learn about tolerance, respect, democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law but fundamental British values and SMSC development are not an integral part of the school's ethos.
- Pupils are given responsibilities. Increasingly, they are taking part in learning activities in the college and some represent the college at sport. Pupils value the rewards system but leaders are aware that it could be used more effectively to promote learning.
- Pupils feel safe in school and bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will deal quickly and effectively with any incidents should they happen. Clear routines and access to staff support help pupils to feel secure in school.
- Pupils are taught to stay safe when using the internet, and they learn about how to protect themselves from the dangers of radicalisation, gangs, knives, substance misuse, drugs, including alcohol, and child sexual exploitation.
- Personal development and welfare and positive behaviour are promoted effectively at the alternative provision that is still used. Communication is good and staff work closely with the provider to ensure that the behaviour and welfare needs of pupils are met.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Behaviour is usually well managed and almost all pupils improve their conduct while attending Kickstart. However, fixed-term exclusions, particularly for verbal abuse of staff, are higher than the national average.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons. The learning of other pupils is rarely disrupted and pupils' conduct during social time is positive. Some pupils access the college's canteen at lunch and breaktime.
- Pupils respond well to established routines. 'Ready, respectful and safe' is used consistently to help prepare pupils for learning.
- Although improving, attendance is still too low. Leaders have correctly identified this as a key area that needs to improve further. Consequently, they are working closely with outside agencies, families and pupils to reduce absence. Fewer pupils have modified timetables and some pupils have greatly improved attendance. There are also individuals who have excellent attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, too few pupils have gained accredited qualifications in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Too many pupils have not made good progress during their time at the school or while attending alternative providers.
- Leaders are aware that the way that progress is currently analysed does not give them a clear understanding of how individuals or groups of pupils are progressing in different

subjects. This slows down the progress that pupils make, as informed interventions have not happened rapidly. Plans are in place to address this by using the system that is used at Telford College.

- A larger proportion of pupils are now being entered for a wider range of qualifications. Last year, pupils gained accreditation in GCSEs, functional skills and BTECs. Pupils are studying more GCSE subjects this year and the offer is planned to increase next year.
- Since the school was formed, pupils have consistently attained GCSE passes in art and they have also achieved well in sporting qualifications. In 2017, more pupils gained GCSE English and mathematics and higher passes in functional skills in these subjects than previously.
- Pupils are encouraged to read and there have been marked improvements in many pupils' reading skills since they joined Kickstart. Current pupils who attend regularly are now making faster progress in English and mathematics.
- Most groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make similar progress to each other. However, the most able pupils are not consistently challenged to attain the highest grades.
- Improved careers education and access to the college's students' services team have led to a greater proportion of Year 11 pupils now having a clear pathway into further education, training or employment. In the past, pupils were not effectively prepared for their next stage and too many did not move on to positive destinations.

School details

Unique reference number	142085
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	10048376

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rosie Beswick
Executive Headteacher	Julian Kirkpatrick
Telephone number	01952 642 541
Website	www.tcat.ac.uk/kickstart-academy-pru
Email address	Julian.Kirkpatrick@tcat.ac.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Kickstart is a small pupil referral unit for key stage 4 pupils. It is located in a suite of rooms at Telford College. Most pupils who attend the school have been excluded from other schools.
- Very few pupils have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- A small number of pupils attend part-time alternative provision at the Education Development Service SEEDS Centre.
- Kickstart became part of the TCAT multi-academy trust in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons and observed learning with school leaders. An inspector also visited the off-site alternative provider.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, and observed behaviour in lessons and during social time. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, three members of the board of trustees, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met separately with a trustee who is also a local authority officer.
- There were not enough responses to Parent View for the results to be analysed, but two free-text comments and the school's feedback from 12 recent parental questionnaires were reviewed. There were no responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and inspectors looked at published information on the school's website.
- The interim headteacher was absent during the inspection. The executive headteacher is currently leading the school.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Ashley

Ofsted Inspector

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