

The Telford Priory School

New Road, Telford, Shropshire TF2 7AB

Inspection dates

12–13 June 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

- Current pupils' progress requires improvement in the majority of subjects. However, some pupils, especially the most able, are underachieving.
- While the quality of teaching is improving, some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Their planning does not build on pupils' prior learning well enough. On occasion, this leads to pupils becoming disengaged and poor behaviour which teachers do not address. This slows pupils' progress.
- The leadership of special educational needs (SEN) is underdeveloped. Consequently, the support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, especially in lessons, does not help them to make strong progress.
- Middle leaders know where improvements need to be made and have clear action plans in place to address weaknesses. However, many are new to their roles so the impact of their actions is yet to be seen.
- While leaders use the pupil premium to provide support for disadvantaged pupils, they do not evaluate carefully enough how well this support helps these pupils. Therefore, leaders are unclear if the use of the funding is helping disadvantaged pupils to make strong progress.
- Attendance rates have improved over the last three years, but they remain below national averages. Some pupils continue to miss too much school.
- Behaviour around school is calm and pupils socialise well together. However, pupils' attitudes to learning are variable. Some pupils do not consistently work to the best of their ability.
- Leaders do not analyse trends in behaviour and attendance in sufficient detail. Consequently, they do not tackle areas of concern quickly.
- A few teachers do not use assessment systems consistently, so some information about how well pupils achieve is unclear.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a precise understanding of the school's weaknesses. Their actions are successfully driving more rapid school improvements.
- The redesigned curriculum helps to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education, training and employment.
- The multi-academy trust and governors provide a high level of challenge and support which is effectively helping the school to move forward at pace.
- The majority of parents are now fully supportive of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve rates of progress for all groups of pupils, especially the most able, in all subjects and thereby raise attainment.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the behaviour systems are applied consistently across the school
 - leaders' analysis of attendance and behaviour trends over time is developed to enable more rapid identification of the key issues that need addressing
 - new senior and middle leaders are fully supported to develop their skills further
 - assessment systems are used consistently to provide more accurate information about all groups of pupils
 - the use of the pupil premium funding is fully reviewed and evaluated to check it is improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and personal development by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons so that they are consistent across the school
 - further improving pupils' attitudes towards their learning and pride in their work
 - ensuring that attendance rates, especially for pupils who frequently miss school, continue to rise.
- Improve the leadership of SEN so that:
 - there is clear oversight of the quality of the SEN provision and how well it is helping pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make progress
 - teachers use information about pupils' additional needs to plan effectively for them in all lessons.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise expectations and the level of challenge for all groups of pupils
 - use assessment information accurately to plan work to meet pupils' learning needs to enable them to be fully engaged in their learning, make rapid progress and eradicate low-level disruption.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In September 2015 two local schools merged to form this new school. The merger presented the headteacher and the multi-academy trust with some very significant challenges, including weak teaching, poor behaviour, minimal leadership capacity and very low parental confidence and support.
- The headteacher and her new senior leaders tackled the most pressing issues swiftly and highly effectively, which has led to some rapid improvements in all aspects of school performance in a short space of time. As a result, current pupils are making better progress, and the number of pupils who are significantly underachieving is reducing. However, the headteacher recognises that further improvements are necessary to ensure that pupils receive a consistently good education to enable them to make the rapid progress needed to achieve their full potential.
- The leadership of SEN is underdeveloped. Some improvements in identifying the additional needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have been made. These pupils all now have 'access to learning plans' which detail what support they need. However, leaders do not check that teachers use this information to plan for their needs in lessons. Only a minority of teachers use this information consistently. Consequently, support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in class is weak and does not help them to make sufficient progress.
- In addition to this, leaders do not monitor the quality of additional support outside lessons well enough. While some of this support helps pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make better progress, it is unclear which support is most effective. As a result, leaders are unable to evaluate which support needs to be continued or which needs to be improved or cease. This means that leaders have a limited understanding of whether the additional funding received is used effectively.
- Leaders have developed a range of additional support for disadvantaged pupils. For example, additional reading support has helped some pupils to improve their reading ages. Pupils now have a wider choice of more vocational courses to follow in key stage 4 which are matched well to their learning needs. However, leaders do not evaluate carefully how well the pupil premium is used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress. Leaders' overview of the effectiveness of the funding use is patchy.
- Middle leaders have quickly grasped a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. They have developed detailed action plans to address the weaknesses and have begun to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their departments. They work closely with teachers and support them to develop their teaching skills. However, many are new to their post and the action plans have only recently been implemented. As a result, the full impact of their actions is yet to be seen.
- Despite the significant challenges the school faced when it initially opened, the headteacher has shown an impressive determination and resolve to drive the school forward. Along with the senior leaders, the headteacher has implemented a clear

school improvement strategy which has improved the school considerably. The senior leadership team is a cohesive group that shares the same vision to continue the school improvement journey. The vast majority of staff are also now committed to this vision and appreciate the support that they receive.

- The multi-academy trust has been instrumental in helping the school to make rapid improvements. Leaders utilise expertise from across the trust to help support and develop teaching and learning and their own leadership skills. Leaders participate in peer reviews with other leaders from across the trust, identifying where further developments are needed. The trust then ensures that additional support is put in place quickly. The support from the trust is highly effective.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning precisely identifies strengths and weaknesses in teachers' skills, such as the quality of feedback to pupils. They then analyse this information and provide bespoke professional development and support to improve teaching skills. Through further monitoring, including raising attainment meetings and teaching, learning and assessment forums, leaders check that the professional development is improving the quality of teaching and learning. Where it is not, leaders take further action to address the continued weaknesses. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, eradicating any remaining inadequate teaching.
- Leaders have redesigned the school's curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of the current pupils. It is both broad and balanced and provides pupils with improved learning experiences. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of enrichment activities, such as the boxing club and the Duke of York's 'Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award'. Key stage 4 pupils have a wide choice of options, including vocational courses. The careers and enterprise officer provides pupils with support and guidance to help them make appropriate GCSE option choices matched to their interests and abilities. Visits to higher education institutions raise pupils' aspirations. Fundamental British values are promoted effectively across the curriculum and through tutor times and assemblies. Pupils are now increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use additional funding to help pupils improve their literacy and numeracy skills well. Pupils receive additional support through targeted programmes, with the majority making good progress in developing these skills.
- At the end of 2016, parental views expressed through Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, were highly negative. Over 80% of parents expressed negative views about the leadership and management, and only 16% of respondents would recommend the school at that time. However, parental views have changed dramatically. At the time of the inspection, responses to the survey showed that over 80% of parents have positive views about the leadership and management and would recommend the school. This is testament to the significant improvements leaders have made over the last three years.

Governance of the school

- Currently there is an Education Advisory Board (EAB) in place. The EAB is responsible for the governance of the school. The board members are highly skilled, which enables them to hold leaders to account rigorously for the school's performance.
- The EAB meets every three weeks to check the progress the school is making against

the key priorities for improvement. Leaders provide the EAB with very detailed information about all aspects of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes, behaviour and safeguarding.

- The EAB scrutinises the information carefully and provides leaders with a high level of challenge to check that it is both accurate and shows improvements. Where improvements are not seen, the EAB holds leaders to account, but also uses further support to help leaders continue the school improvement journey. However, leaders do not provide the EAB with sufficient information about how well the pupil premium funding is used. This makes it difficult for the EAB to hold leaders to account for this aspect of leadership.
- The EAB ensures that all of its statutory responsibilities are met, including checking that safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose and applied consistently across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding is deeply embedded across the school. Leaders have a comprehensive training programme in place to help all staff to understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. They check that staff both understand and use these policies and procedures and provide regular updates where needed. All staff and visitors are subject to appropriate checks to ensure that they pose no risk to pupils.
- High levels of supervision are in place throughout the day and positive relationships are evident between staff and pupils during breaktimes. Leaders support vulnerable pupils very well and ensure that the right support is in place to help them when needed. All are vigilant to the potential risks of harm to pupils, both in and outside school, and report any concerns quickly.
- The curriculum helps pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, including through assemblies and tutorial time. For example, pupils are knowledgeable about the risks of radicalisation and extremism and child sexual exploitation. Pupils also say that the school provides them with a safe environment, including practising 'lockdown' procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- While there is no inadequate teaching in the school, the quality of teaching both between subjects and within departments remains too variable and is not yet consistently good.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, especially of the most able pupils. These teachers do not use the assessment systems well enough to establish what pupils know and can do to plan work which further develops their learning. Consequently, pupils do not build on prior learning and their progress slows.
- Where teachers do not match work appropriately to pupils' abilities, a few pupils become disinterested during the lessons and their behaviour deteriorates. Some teachers do not address this behaviour, leading to other pupils' learning being disrupted. In addition to this, some teachers do not insist that pupils produce work to

the best of their ability, which further limits their progress. Work in these books is poorly presented and shows little progress.

- Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects. For example, numeracy skills are developed in science, and pupils write evaluations of artwork. However, the quality of this work is variable across the school.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils show a high level of interest in their work. Teachers use effective questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their learning. Teachers provide learning resources which stimulate pupils' interest and engage them in their learning. They show strong subject knowledge and use technical subject language well. This helps pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Where teaching is most effective, pupils' behaviour, including their attitudes to learning, is excellent. They work hard and show a determination to improve and develop their skills in the subject. Books in these classes are well presented and show strong progress over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils have mixed views about their school. Some pupils feel that bullying is prevalent, while others say that it rarely happens and is dealt with effectively if it does happen. Pupils understand what bullying is, including cyber bullying, and the majority would seek out help if needed.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are also variable. Throughout the inspection, there were examples of pupils who were disinterested in their lessons and showed no desire to learn. Some books show that pupils do not try hard and make little progress. However, there were also examples where pupils worked diligently and showed a true desire to learn. Work in these pupils' books shows that they make good progress.
- Personal, social, health and economic education, while still developing, provides pupils with a range of learning opportunities to support their personal development. For example, during a tutorial, pupils learned how to recognise signs of stress and actions they could take if they feel they are suffering from stress.
- Pupils who attend education in other settings are well supported. Leaders ensure that they attend these settings and that they are safe when there. Leaders also check that the pupils make progress in their learning and receive an appropriate education to meet their needs. These pupils make good progress. Leaders are now in the process of developing a high level of bespoke support for these pupils within the school, but this is at an early stage of development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- Pupils' behaviour, while improving, remains too variable across the school. In some lessons, pupils' behaviour is unacceptable. Pupils call out and talk over the teacher, complete little or no work and disrupt the learning of others. Teachers do not consistently apply the school's behaviour system, and, in a few cases, pupils do not respond to the use of the system. Consequently, pupils learn little in these lessons. In other lessons, behaviour is positive and pupils demonstrate positive learning behaviours. Exclusions have reduced over time but remain above the national average.
- Current attendance figures, including the attendance of pupils who frequently miss school, remain below national averages. Leaders have taken a range of actions to address these issues. Revised attendance policies and procedures are in place and absences are followed up robustly. An education welfare service provides additional support to help pupils attend school more regularly. Pupils receive awards for 100% attendance, and high attendance is promoted positively across the school. This has resulted in improved attendance.
- Leaders' analysis of behaviour and attendance patterns and trends lacks rigour. Their lack of detailed analysis means that the key issues in behaviour and attendance are not identified quickly enough, which delays further improvements in these areas.
- During breaktimes and lunchtimes, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere around the school. Pupils interact positively with one another, and with staff on duty. Pupils are respectful and polite.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress at the end of Year 11 was significantly below the national average in all subjects. Progress for disadvantaged pupils, the most able and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was also significantly below the national average in all areas.
- Pupils' attainment, for all groups of pupils and in all subjects, at the end of Year 11 in 2016 and 2017, was also below the national average.
- Currently, pupils are beginning to make better progress, especially pupils in Year 7. However, due to the variability in the quality of teaching and learning, this progress is not consistently good in all subjects. Some older pupils are beginning to close the gaps in their learning, but there is still some way to go before they achieve the standards they should.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are also beginning to make improved progress. However, this progress is not consistent.
- As a result of the improved curriculum and careers guidance, the proportion of pupils who do not continue with their education, or do not secure training or employment after Year 11, is now below the national average. Most pupils go on to further education, with a small proportion entering apprenticeships or securing employment.
- Pupils who receive education in other settings receive appropriate support to meet their learning needs. This helps them to continue their learning. These pupils make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	142285
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	10048407

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

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	921
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Acting chair of governors	Mr Philip Hamilton
Headteacher	Ms Stacey Jordan
Telephone number	01952 386400
Website	www.telfordprioryschool.co.uk
Email address	info@telfordprioryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2015 following the merger of two previous schools. Both of the predecessor schools had been judged as inadequate.
- The school became part of the Community Academies Trust in November 2015. Governance responsibilities are currently delegated to the EAB.
- The school uses a number of alternative providers: House 1; The Linden Centre; AFC Telford; and Wildwoods Education Centre.
- The school receives a range of support from schools within the multi-academy trust.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards for progress and attainment at key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spoke to pupils both informally and formally. They spoke to staff around the site and held panel meetings with groups of staff. They met with members of the EAB, members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders with subject responsibilities.
- Pupils' attendance and behaviour were evaluated through visits to lessons, observations during social times, discussions with pupils and analysis of the school's attendance and behaviour tracking information.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was evaluated through observations of lessons, some with senior leaders, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of the school's internal assessment information.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including on safeguarding, pupils' attainment, the school's self-evaluation and the development plans.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 69 parent responses to Parent View, the 12 free-text responses and the school's information on parental feedback. There were no responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Antony Edkins	Ofsted Inspector
Lois Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted 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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