

TBAP Cambridge AP Academy

Ascham Road, Cambridge CB4 2BD

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- The last academic year was a turbulent time for the school. A series of interim headteachers in the spring term coincided with a decline in standards, where behaviour deteriorated and attendance fell sharply.
- Year 11 pupils last year did not make good progress from their different starting points, because too many missed school too often.
- Leaders do not always monitor pupils' progress closely enough. Systems are improving but need to become fully developed.
- Leaders cannot clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of their actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders need to refine their systems in order to identify and provide better support with their learning for pupils who have additional needs.
- Leaders' systems for recording information are not systematic or efficient. Staff are sometimes unable to access the information that they need readily.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive headteacher and head of school are building on the improvements of the previous executive headteacher.
- Current pupils make better progress because teaching, learning and assessment are good. Staff plan interesting activities that challenge pupils and help them to learn.
- Attendance has improved markedly since Easter. The incremental increases month-on-month show that improvements are being sustained.
- Leaders have improved behaviour. Pupils say that they notice the difference since Easter.
- Staff morale is high. Staff build strong relationships with pupils.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and value the education that they receive.
- Many pupils arrive with a history of severely disrupted education. The vast majority are supported into employment, education or training by the time they leave.
- Parents appreciate the work of staff and notice the difference it makes to their children's lives.
- The trust and governors provide effective support and challenge to ensure that improvements are maintained.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by:
 - sustaining the improvements in pupils' attendance so that pupils continue to benefit from the good teaching and learning on offer.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders check the records that staff complete routinely to make sure all the information they need is recorded
 - ensuring that leaders and governors monitor pupils' progress more closely so that they can quickly demonstrate the good progress that pupils make, including through the impact of any additional funding
 - refining systems to identify and provide support in their learning for pupils who have additional needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There was a marked decline in standards between Christmas and Easter last year. Pupils and staff had a turbulent time with a series of interim headteachers. In this period, pupils' behaviour deteriorated and attendance fell sharply, meaning that too few pupils made the progress of which they were capable.
- Leaders are not always able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their actions quickly and easily, because their processes for recording information are not systematic. Consequently, staff are sometimes unable to access the information that they need readily. While leaders monitor closely how pupils are doing, their current systems do not allow them to easily show the progress that pupils make.
- Although disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to non-disadvantaged pupils, leaders cannot explain which of their interventions have been most successful. Leaders acknowledge that they need to be more evaluative when reporting on how effectively they spend any additional funding.
- Leaders need to refine their systems to help identify and provide better support in their learning for pupils who have additional needs. Although there are no pupils who currently have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, staff need to be fully aware of any unmet needs for pupils below EHC plan level.
- The trust appointed an executive headteacher to take charge from Easter last academic year. Pupils' attendance and behaviour show marked improvements from this point. The new executive headteacher and head of school, although new in post, have had a successful start to the new academic year and are building on these improvements. Their clear vision to raise aspiration is already helping pupils to aim higher and achieve more.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is good. Leaders check standards routinely and provide useful support and training to help staff develop their practice. Previous issues, such as weak assessment, have been addressed. The termly newsletters to staff and pupils ensure that teaching and learning remain at the forefront of school improvement.
- Leaders have reviewed the pastoral system and place more emphasis on rewarding positive behaviour. This has worked, and pupils behave well. The rise in the number of positive behaviour events and fall in negative incidents and exclusions is significant.
- The way staff build relationships with pupils epitomises fundamental British values. They model the core values of courtesy, tolerance and respect very well. As one pupil said, 'Staff have a sense of humour and treat us as like they are on the same level as us.'
- Pupils' attendance in the middle of last year dipped sharply. Leaders introduced more effective systems to tackle persistent absences and there have been increases in pupils' attendance every month since.
- Leaders have adapted their curriculum to better meet pupils' needs. A quality core curriculum is complemented by valuable vocational options linked to pupils' own

interests and career plans. For example, the work skills qualification helps pupils to develop their social and employability skills, while improving their self-esteem.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven throughout the curriculum, and they benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. For example, residential trips to north Norfolk, the 'ACT UP' project, farm club and trips to the job centre to name but a few. Staff help pupils to develop the skills that they need to help them manage their behaviour better and become more independent.
- Staff morale is high, and they work well together. Staff are passionate, committed, and work hard to help pupils with a range of complex needs to re-engage in learning. All the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were highly positive because staff feel valued and proud to work at the school.
- Parents appreciate the work of staff and notice the difference it makes to their children's lives. As one said: 'I had a lot of doubts about my daughter having to start at this school in the beginning, but I am glad she did. She's made a lot of progress and she actually looks forward to coming in and getting on with her learning every day. Her attendance has also improved, and I finally have a happy teenager again.'
- The responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils were universally positive. Pupils say unequivocally that they feel safe, well looked after and are supported to achieve their best.

Governance

- The local advisory board brings a range of expertise and skills that allow them to hold leaders to account effectively. For example, governors have insisted on more information linked to pupils' progress in order to challenge and support leaders more effectively.
- Governors and the trust board have a mostly accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They are aware of the difficulties faced last year and are helping leaders to bring about the required improvements.
- Those responsible for governance are rightly proud of the school's caring and nurturing environment and its achievements in helping pupils to re-engage in learning and move to post-16 education successfully.
- The trust realised that the temporary headteachers and continual change were having an adverse effect on pupils' behaviour and attendance. They were quick to redeploy an executive headteacher to take charge for the summer term and have strengthened leadership capacity further for the start of the new year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the single central record is well maintained. It shows that statutory safeguarding checks on adults working at the school are undertaken and recorded.
- Leaders have successfully woven safeguarding elements into the curriculum. Pupils overwhelmingly state that they feel safe at school because 'Teachers look after you.'

- Staff know what to do and who to speak to should they have concerns. The designated safeguarding person acts on any disclosures appropriately and works closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe. The safeguarding case files are detailed and show how staff use this information to protect pupils.
- Procedures to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism are firmly established. All staff training on safeguarding is up to date. Staff are alert to other risks to pupils' safety, such as county lines, and they take measures to help keep them safe.
- The processes for checking on pupils who are absent are thorough. First day calling, followed by welfare checks ensure that leaders know where pupils are and that they are safe. Although checks are completed, the information associated with these could not always be found readily. Leaders have used different systems to record checks in the past and are due to move to a trust-wide system imminently. Leaders acknowledge the previous issues and feel the new system will ensure that checks are recorded and stored more systematically.
- Any pupils who go missing from education are referred to the local authority in line with statutory guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Current pupils make good progress. Pupils often arrive with highly negative experiences of education. These include many previous schools, frequent exclusions, and significant periods of absence leading to a fragmented education and extensive gaps in their learning. Nonetheless, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. For example, Year 11 pupils talk confidently about the use of innuendo and can explain oxymorons when looking at unrequited love in *Romeo and Juliet*.
- Staff use their good subject knowledge to break down concepts so that pupils understand difficult topics more easily. Pupils demonstrate their clear understanding when discussing the symptoms and treatments for sexually transmitted diseases in science. They ask probing questions, such as: 'Can either parent transmit the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to their children?'
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and the positive learning environment means that they study hard and learn successfully. Teachers use a range of strategies to identify any gaps in pupils' learning and provide support to help them catch up. The comprehensive literacy support, including extra help on reading and comprehension, helps pupils develop their reading and writing well.
- Teachers know pupils well and plan their work carefully so that pupils find it interesting and challenging. This was seen during 'Prove it', where the competitive element clearly motivated pupils to use the narrative in a text to confirm or deny accompanying statements.
- The relationships between the staff and the pupils are a real strength. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons because teachers are 'Good at making the learning fun.' In a food technology lesson, pupils take pride in their individual tasks when working together to make spaghetti carbonara.
- Teachers use questioning well. Pupils' discussions highlight their ability to recall prior learning. Where practice was most effective, teachers then used this information to

adapt learning further so that it met pupils' needs precisely.

- Pupils benefit from a series of lessons that staff have carefully structured. Staff focus on strong visual and practical activities that help pupils to build on their previous knowledge. Pupils develop their understanding well because they make links with previous learning.
- In the rare lessons where practice is less effective, teachers move on to more difficult work before pupils are fully secure in their learning. This can lead to a small number of pupils being confused and switching off.
- In some lessons, staff need to ensure that pupils begin work more quickly and remain fully focused to the end of the lesson so that no learning time is wasted.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and value the education that they receive. Tutor time is used positively and gives pupils opportunities to develop the 'soft' skills such as listening to others and considering their viewpoints sensitively that lead to a more harmonious environment.
- There is an orderly environment where pupils feel safe, valued and well cared for. Pupils can see the improvements made since last year, as one stated, 'It is now stricter than a mainstream school where bullying is not tolerated.'
- Pupils are shown the value of healthy eating habits through the meals that they help cook at lunchtime. They learn how to prepare food, use fresh vegetables and eat nutritiously. It is a shame that there is not a communal area where staff and pupils can enjoy their meals together.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities that add to their personal development and welfare. Swimming, biking, horse riding, high ropes and the gym help them to work together while keeping them fit. Trips to theme parks, ten pin bowling and the zoo give pupils the opportunity to develop their social skills and add to the community feel of the school.
- The charity projects and coffee mornings that pupils arrange are an ideal way for them to help others less fortunate than themselves, while developing their empathy and self-esteem.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff are patient and understanding when dealing with some challenging behaviours, meaning that pupils trust staff and realise that they are there to support them. This helps pupils to change how they act for the better.
- Behaviour has improved. Pupils say that the school is 'A lot better because it is calmer, we are listened to, and there is less running around.' The number of positive behaviour

points has grown rapidly, with a corresponding decline in the number of negative incidents recorded. Pupils make significant improvements in their behaviour over time because the immediacy of 'points' allows for quick feedback.

- Exclusions and serious incidents have declined sharply. Staff build in opportunities for pupils to reflect on their behaviour throughout the day. This helps them to take more responsibility for their actions and learn from their mistakes.
- The current attendance figures show a significant improvement over time because pupils now want to attend and learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' rates of progress must be seen fully in the context of their individual needs. Comparing results against the national picture is not always reliable, because numbers in each year group are low and pupils mostly join the school with significant gaps in their learning.
- Despite this, too few Year 11 pupils made good progress from their different starting points last year. Too many missed school too often, especially between Christmas and Easter. This meant that a number of these pupils failed to reach their target grades, especially in mathematics and science. If pupils are not present, they are unable to benefit from the good teaching and learning on offer.
- A small minority of staff do not use the information that they have to help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding as effectively as they could. A small number of current pupils achieve less well in some subjects because teachers do not plan work precisely matched to their needs.
- Almost all current pupils make good progress from their various starting points across most subjects because of the good teaching and individual support that they receive. The work in pupils' books demonstrates this well. This is particularly the case in English, where pupils' use of 'point, evidence, example' demonstrates their developing analytical and evaluative skills well. The work in the books is well presented and shows that pupils are proud of what they have achieved.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum further this year to raise pupils' aspirations and develop their core skills in English and mathematics, including English literature. Alongside this, pupils choose from a wide range of other subjects to develop practical skills and gain accredited qualifications. These include home cooking, work skills, creative art, enterprise, bike maintenance and first aid.
- Many pupils arrive with a history of severely disrupted education. Pupils achieved some notable successes last year, especially in art, food skills and English language. Pupils receive independent and relevant careers advice that helps the vast majority progress into employment, further education or training.
- In 2018, virtually all pupils leaving Year 11 achieved nationally recognised qualifications in a range of subjects. Less-able pupils gained entry-level qualifications, while the most able pupils achieved at GCSE level. Consequently, some pupils progressed to Level 3 courses at local colleges – a school first!

School details

Unique reference number	142378
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10053465

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

Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16 (13 to 16 currently on roll)
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Dix
Executive headteacher	Sarah Roscoe
Telephone number	01354 750 369
Website	www.tbap.org.uk/cambridge
Email address	sroscoe@tbap.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- TBAP Cambridge AP Academy converted to become an alternative provision school on 1 October 2015. The school joined the Tri-Borough Alternative Provision Trust (TBAP), a multi-academy trust at this time. When its predecessor school, The Cambridge Learning Base, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The head of school reports to a local advisory board and the executive headteacher reports to a regional advisory board, both of whom then report to the trust board.
- Audit, safeguarding, human resources, finance and premises committees monitor standards in these areas and report to the trust board.
- The current head of school and executive headteacher both took up post in September 2018. The last substantive head of school left in December 2017. There were three interim headteachers in the spring term. At Easter, the trust appointed an experienced executive headteacher from another school in the trust because it was concerned about attendance and behaviour.

- There are 24 pupils on roll. While pupils have social, emotional or mental health needs, no pupils currently at the school have an education, health and care plan.
- At the time of the inspection, the school did not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted inspector.
- Inspectors observed pupils learning in each class, all of which were seen jointly with a senior leader. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and before and after lessons.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders, staff, parents, two groups of pupils, two members, including the chair of the local advisory board, the chief executive of the trust and a representative from the local authority.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted's free-text service and to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to be reported on directly, although inspectors did consider the free-text responses. Inspectors considered the 8 responses to the Ofsted online staff survey and the 6 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- The inspection team scrutinised information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, read details of the work of the local advisory board and the trust and scrutinised pupils' work in lessons. Pupils' books from different year groups and subjects were checked to see progress over time.

Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jackie Mullan

Ofsted Inspector

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