

The Telford Park School

District Centre, Stirchley, Telford, Shropshire TF3 1FA

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Though many elements of the school have improved since the last inspection, pupils' behaviour, outcomes and the quality of teaching are not yet good.
- Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of pupils with high prior attainment. Too often, these pupils' work does not reflect their potential.
- The prevalence of fixed-term exclusions is too great, as is the number of pupils who spend time in the internal exclusion room.
- Pupils in the current Year 11 are behind in some subjects. For some, this is the result of weak teaching at key stage 3. For others, it is because they have joined the school part way through a key stage.
- There are still some pockets of weaker teaching. Where this is the case, pupils' progress is consequently weaker.
- While improving, pupils' overall absence and the proportion of pupils who are absent regularly is higher than the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is a calm and positive place where pupils feel, and are, safe.
- Safeguarding is extremely effective. The school supports pupils' welfare very well and pupils' personal development is strong.
- Leadership is good and leaders are very well supported by the multi-academy trust. Shared subject leadership across two schools in the trust is having a positive impact on the school.
- Leaders' work to improve the curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve all pupils' outcomes, particularly focusing on:
 - pupils currently in Year 11
 - those pupils who join the school part way through a key stage
 - pupils who have high prior attainment.
- Continue to improve teaching, by:
 - focusing on areas where pockets of weaker practice still exist
 - making sure that high-prior-attaining pupils are challenged more consistently.
- Further improve pupils' attendance so that it reaches at least the national average and fewer pupils are persistently absent.
- Reduce the amount of lessons that pupils miss, by:
 - further improving pupils' behaviour
 - reducing the number of pupils who spend time in the 'consequences room'
 - further reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are effectively improving this school over time. Though teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes and behaviour are not yet good, they are getting better. Leaders are honest about the challenges they face and put pupils first when they make decisions. Leaders have not opted for 'quick fixes' but have diligently improved teaching practice, the curriculum, the culture and the ethos of the school.
- The multi-academy trust has a positive impact on the school. Leaders in the trust have established a highly constructive working relationship with another local school. The schools share the leadership of some key subjects, share resources, have common assessments and moderate pupils' work together. As a result of this collaboration, the school is improving. Leaders feel a strong responsibility to pupils in both schools.
- Leaders have developed a range of pastoral provisions to support pupils in three different areas of the school. Whether to assist with behaviour, special educational needs, or social, emotional or mental health, the various provisions offer valuable and effective support to get pupils back 'on track' and into lessons.
- The curriculum is strong and improving. More pupils than in the past now have access to EBacc subjects when this is best for them. Pupils have experiences of a wide range of subjects during key stage 3 and plenty of courses to choose from at key stage 4. In the wider curriculum, pupils have sex and relationships education, access to the arts, technical subjects and sport. Where pupils are behind in mathematics or English, leaders have built-in flexibility for them to do extra study in these subjects while still allowing them to do other exciting subjects that they enjoy. There is a developing range of extra-curricular activities which pupils value. Leaders recognise that the opportunities for pupils to go on out-of-school visits is limited and have firm plans in place for interesting visits in the near future.
- Leaders recognise that pupils who are disadvantaged have two main barriers to their progress: below-average attendance and weaker literacy skills. They are working effectively to improve both of these areas, though there is still work to do to improve attendance.
- Leaders take their duty to promote equalities seriously. For example, the library has a section that includes literature about sexuality, relationships and gender, helpful signs spell out that homophobic language is not tolerated and assemblies reiterate this message regularly.
- This school has exceptional levels of pupil movement. The number of pupils leaving the school between Year 10 and Year 11 is well above what would be expected for a school in this context. Inspectors explored this in detail and found that leaders keep detailed records of those pupils who leave so that they can spot any patterns that emerge. Pupils leave for a range of reasons, to a variety of different schools. Some move into elective home education. There was no evidence of any attempt to coerce pupils to leave or to manipulate the school's results.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by the trust and a local governing board. Governance is effective because:
 - the trust supports local governors, ensures that they are well trained and can, therefore, hold leaders to account
 - governors are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They understand the key priorities for improvement and regularly question leaders on how well these things are developing
 - governors have safeguarding training and, with the support of the trust, oversee how well the culture of safeguarding is maintained across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders supervise the work of others to make sure that across the staff, well-trained adults help keep pupils safe.
- Recognising that there is a range of risks to young people locally, leaders consistently strengthen and review safeguarding procedures. They keep a keen eye on any risks that emerge and respond to them. For example, having seen the potential risk of social media and online gaming, they provided useful overviews for parents and held assemblies, lessons and tutorials. This means that pupils are well informed about the risks and can keep themselves safe.
- There is a culture of vigilance across the school. Inspectors saw a range of examples of occasions where pupils with weak attendance or changes in behaviour led to leaders identifying that they were at risk. Records about safeguarding are kept securely, and are complete and accurate. These records also show clearly that leaders take swift action to protect pupils when necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders have established clear expectations of teachers' practice. For example, across the school, pupils use 'personal learning checklists' to improve their knowledge effectively. Teachers generally plan lessons well to meet pupils' needs. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good. There are pockets of weaker practice and in some subjects pupils remain behind as a result of weak teaching in the past.
- Sometimes pupils do not work to the best of their abilities. This is because their teachers do not consistently challenge them to do so. Their work is completed to the minimum standard or without the level of detail needed to reach higher grades. This issue is seen more starkly with the most able pupils. Leaders know about this issue and are actively addressing it.
- Leaders have made some changes that are having a positive impact. For example, following last year's very weak outcomes, they analysed pupils' answers in examinations very carefully to see what was not well taught. Teachers now regularly test pupils' knowledge to see where there are gaps that could hinder their progress.

They also make sure that they very regularly tell pupils when their work is right and wrong so that misconceptions are addressed. Teachers moderate work with other schools and share assessments so that they can be confident in pupils' progress. Overall, these actions are improving pupils' learning across the school.

- Leaders recognised that weaker literacy skills were a key barrier to pupils' success. They have responded effectively to this. As a result of leaders creating a strong culture around reading, pupils have a respect for literature. In many lessons, teachers model what language needs to be used in responses, focus effectively on vocabulary and model paragraphing and text structure. Tests of pupils' reading ages show that pupils' reading and reasoning are improving over time.
- Where teaching is most consistently effective, pupils actively engage in lessons independently of the teacher, taking responsibility for their own learning. They do this where they have well-developed subject knowledge. For example, inspectors saw an art lesson where pupils were working very independently on a commission from a local business, working collaboratively and making their own decisions about their work. In other lessons pupils did complex experiments using equipment independently. Pupils' confidence to work by themselves is improving over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a safe place where staff take pupils' welfare very seriously. Pupils spoke with inspectors about the many ways in which staff support them and said that they feel safe in this school. They feel that staff genuinely care about them. They say that bullying is rare and dealt with well when it occurs.
- Pupils take pride in their achievements. For example, inspectors spoke to pupils who had received reading awards and described in detail the hard work it had taken to get them.
- Pupils know about fundamental British values and discuss them animatedly. They speak with conviction about democracy, elections, tolerance and respect. Around the school are visual reminders about leaders' expectations of this. For example, there are messages about kindness, understanding and respect around the school.
- There is a range of interesting activities on offer outside of lessons. These include sports fixtures, clubs, the student council, charity and community events and arts events. Pupils' personal development is effectively improved through these activities and pupils value them. For example, during the inspection the school staged its first-ever show. This large-scale musical production involved an extensive cast, live musicians and a technical crew. Pupils loved the opportunity to work together to produce an impressive outcome. They were proud ambassadors for their school when performing for other local schools, their friends, parents and the community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- In corridors, lessons and around the school there is a calm, well-ordered atmosphere. During social times, pupils' behaviour is positive because leaders manage the school carefully. For example, there are rolling lunchbreaks to minimise crowding, and one-way systems around the school.
- Low-level disruption rarely interrupts lessons because pupils who do not meet the school's strict code of conduct are removed to internal exclusion for the day. Pupils and staff say that this means that lessons run smoothly and learning is better as a result. Inspectors observed pupils behaving politely and responsibly and wearing their uniform with pride.
- While behaviour is improving, and most pupils behave well, still too many pupils do not. Fixed-term exclusions are reducing but are still above the national average. Additionally, between September 2018 and the date of the inspection, too many pupils spent time in internal exclusion. Evidence seen on inspection shows that pupils are not sent to internal exclusion for very small misdemeanours such as the wrong uniform or a lack of equipment.
- Attendance is improving and has done so each year for the last five years. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is also falling. However, pupils' attendance is not yet at the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the overall outcomes of pupils leaving the school have been very weak across many subjects. This is as a result of previous weak teaching and the high numbers of pupils who join the school having had a turbulent education in the past. Pupils who join the school having had patterns of poor behaviour or very weak attendance in the past often make weak progress from their key stage 2 starting points to the end of key stage 4 in Year 11. These pupils' progress negatively affects the published data which, though improving over time and better for current pupils, was still below that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points in 2018.
- Some pupils at key stage 4 still have considerable gaps in their knowledge. Teachers are working to deal with this but leaders rightly accept that there is more work to do on the issue of pupils' incomplete subject knowledge.
- Pupils' work shows that pupils currently in the school are making better progress than those in the past. They have had longer exposure to better teaching and high expectations of their behaviour. This better progress is seen across many subjects and particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9. This better progress is characterised by pupils who know more and can therefore use their knowledge to make further progress. For example, in Year 9 French, pupils' vocabulary is developing well and as a result they can use different linguistic structures using more sophisticated vocabulary. In mathematics, pupils can apply different bodies of mathematical knowledge to new problems. In English, pupils write at length, use a host of different literary devices and spot a writer's intentions independently.
- Leaders take reading seriously because they see it as a key factor in pupils' weak progress in the past. The well-stocked, attractive library is a calm and social space

where pupils enjoy reading. Pupils value the time that they are given to read in school, and an increasing number read often. Testing of pupils' reading age when they enter the school, intensive work to improve reading for meaning and retesting at appropriate intervals show that many pupils across the school are improving their reading age. Over time this is leading to pupils being able to access better the materials they need to use in lessons.

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision for some or all of their education. This provision is positive for pupils and their progress improves as a result.

School details

Unique reference number	139536
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10078666

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	420
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Simon Atkins
Headteacher	Holly Rigby
Telephone number	01952 387400
Website	www.telfordparkschool.co.uk
Email address	info@telfordparkschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February – 2 March 2017

Information about this school

- Telford Park Academy is sponsored by the Community Academies Trust. It shares many leaders and some other staff with another local school, The Telford Langley School.
- It is a small secondary school where the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is around double the national average. It also has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
- The school has exceptional levels of pupil movement. Many pupils leave the school before finishing key stage 4. Around 20% of pupils did not join the school at standard transition times.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the chair of governors, the chief executive officer of the trust, the executive headteacher, headteacher, and the senior team. They also met with pastoral leaders, other staff, a trainee and a newly qualified teacher.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was evaluated through observations of learning, conversations with pupils about their work and scrutiny of pupils' work over time. Inspectors also evaluated leaders' assessments of how well groups of pupils were progressing.
- Inspectors paid close attention to records about pupils who left the school during key stage 3 and 4, because the school has exceptional levels of pupil movement. They evaluated complaints records, the records about elective home education, part-time timetables, behaviour and exclusions, safeguarding and the profile of pupils leaving the school.
- The views of pupils were evaluated through informal and formal conversations with pupils and analysis of the school's own pupil surveys. There were no responses to the inspection questionnaire for pupils.
- Parents' views were evaluated through the 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Twenty-eight members of staff responded to an inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Kent	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Tomes	Ofsted Inspector

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