

Inspection of a good school: Tendring Technology College

Rochford Way, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex CO13 0AZ

Inspection dates:

26–27 November 2019

Outcome

Tendring Technology College continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Over the past couple of years, there have been considerable changes in staffing. In some subjects, pupils have had lots of different teachers. Pupils have not gained a secure grasp of the basic principles in some subjects. They then struggle with more difficult work. This contributed to the fall in pupils' progress.

Pupils behave well for the most part. Where teaching is strongest, pupils listen, debate, concentrate and achieve. Where pupils find it hard to access the work, their behaviour can disrupt others. This is more common on the Thorpe site.

Pupils feel safe, because staff are attentive and approachable. Staff help pupils to overcome anxieties particularly well. Banter or play fighting is not tolerated. As explained to us, pupils 'do not judge others because they are different to you'. Leaders log behaviour and bullying incidents comprehensively. Pupils and staff say that bullying is dealt with well. A small number of parents disagree.

Most pupils are happy and proud of their school. To them, it is a supportive and accepting community. They appreciate the wide range of opportunities to see 'life beyond school': from Iceland to Auschwitz, volleyball to para swimming, and community to diversity week.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders provide a broad, ambitious curriculum. More pupils now study history or geography alongside a foreign language. Staff are clear about what pupils need to learn and how it links to what comes before and after. Leaders and the trust are working to support departments, such as humanities, where there have been issues.

Leaders know which departments are stronger, for example physical education and the arts. Pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science has been about average. Last

year it dropped. There were significant staffing issues last year, and pupils did not get the continuity in teaching that they need.

Some pupils are not fluent with their knowledge and skills, and have gaps in their learning. Staff do not always plan work to help pupils overcome these misconceptions. Where teachers sequence activities well, there is a calm atmosphere in which pupils can learn. Pupils behave, because teachers plan work linked to what pupils know and can do. Some teachers do not do this well. Pupils lose out, leading to low-level disruption.

Most staff use a calm but assertive approach to manage pupils' behaviour. Leaders look to address the root causes of presented behaviours, rather than merely punishing pupils. The 'restore and rebuild' approach is paying dividends. Incidents of poor behaviour and fixed-term exclusions have reduced. Leaders know the next step is to make sure that all staff and pupils buy in to the new system, especially on the Thorpe site.

Leaders are keen to raise aspirations. They want pupils to be part of the school's 'shining stars'. Pupils gain valuable experiences from the different clubs, activities and sporting opportunities on offer. These opportunities help to raise pupils' aspirations, while helping them to build resilience and become more independent. The 'perfect week' is celebrating pupils who attend every day and push themselves to achieve more. Staff work with parents and carers well. They want more pupils to attend every day. Some key groups, including disadvantaged pupils, do not attend well enough and they underachieve. The pupil premium funding is not always used effectively.

Students in the sixth form receive useful advice that helps them to choose the right course. They have a broad offer of academic, vocational and access courses from which to choose. These courses provide useful routes to higher education, employment or training. Students gain extra skills through completing the core maths and extended project qualifications. Work experience placements add weight to students' university applications and enhance employment prospects. Students use private study time constructively, such as working collaboratively on assignments, or developing their designs in the textiles room. Students' progress on applied courses is in line with national figures; it is below average for academic qualifications.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs well catered for. Pupil passports give teachers useful information on how best to meet the needs. Effective leadership and good relationships with parents are key features. Pupils in the specialist provision are helped back into main school classes at their own pace. Those with a history of disrupted education now attend more often and progress well.

Leaders act with integrity. They know about the school's weaknesses and have clear plans in place to secure long-term improvements. Leaders want pupils to do well and act in pupils' best interests. Their aim is for pupils to act respectfully, honestly and responsibly and to 'find their remarkable'.

The trust has a broadly accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Its view is that the school remains good. The trust acknowledges that standards have dipped in a number of subjects. Where pupils' achievements are less than good, the trust is providing support to

move the school forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding processes are very well thought through. Vigilant staff and detailed records give leaders a clear picture on emerging issues, to which they respond accordingly. This helps mitigate potential dangers to pupils' safety. The 'assertive social tracking' is a good example and has led to fewer self-harm disclosures. Staff enact their 'Prevent' duties and refer cases accordingly.

Work with other agencies is of a very high standard. Comprehensive chronologies and tenacious follow-up ensure that pupils receive the help and support they need to stay safe. The school's records of statutory pre-employment checks are meticulous.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils have not been taught well enough. Pupils have gaps in their learning and keep making the same mistakes. Teachers need to plan activities that highlight and address these gaps, so that pupils can tackle more complex work.
- Leaders do not provide enough support to pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils who struggle. These pupils lack fluency in some of the basic subject skills. Leaders need to use additional funding more effectively so that the pupils can achieve highly.
- Some pupils do not attend well enough. This limits the progress they make. Leaders need to work with parents, highlighting the link between attendance and achievement so that pupils attend well, particularly those in Year 9 and Year 11.
- Some pupils do not behave well enough. They disrupt the learning of others. Teachers need to plan activities to make sure all pupils complete work that is appropriately challenging, and all pupils' behaviour is at least good.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Tendring Technology College to be good on 2–3 March 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137188 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10110259 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1789 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 291 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of governing body | Robert Turner |
| Principal | Michael Muldoon |
| Website | www.tendringtechnologycollege.org/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 2–3 March 2016 |

Information about this school

- The school is based on two sites.
 - The Thorpe site on Landermere Road, Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex CO16 0LQ caters for Year 7 to Year 9 pupils.
 - The Frinton site on Rochford Way, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex CO13 0AZ caters for Year 10 to Year 13 pupils.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2016.
- A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2019.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection. Some of the senior leadership team are new in role.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 15 pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. There is a hub on each site for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism and communication difficulties.

- The school uses four providers for alternative provision. These are EM Skills, CF Social work, NEECA and Hawk Farm.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the principal and other senior leaders. An inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of governors and the national director of secondary schools from the trust.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, and physical education. We met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils and looked at pupils' work in these subjects. We also spoke with pupils and staff about different aspects of the school.
- An inspector visited the autism hub, the specialist on-site provision.
- We scrutinised a range of information from the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, the development plan, and their behaviour, attendance and safeguarding records. We reviewed minutes of governing body meetings.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes.
- We considered the 192 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View and the 183 responses in the free-text option. Inspectors also considered the responses of the 119 staff who completed Ofsted's survey of staff views. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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