

Inspection of Teenage Works

Partington House, Partington Street, Failsworth, Manchester M35 9RD

Inspection dates: 19–21 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in Teenage Works School know that staff care about them. They told us that they feel happy, safe and respected for who they are. Pupils know exactly what racism, sexism and homophobic bullying are and insist that discrimination never happens in school.

Parents, carers and social workers describe pupils as being transformed at the school, with greatly improved behaviour and attendance and positive attitudes to learning.

Most staff have high expectations of pupils and make the curriculum engaging. Pupils enjoy boxing, football, swimming and martial arts. They also enjoy taking small animals into local care homes as part of their animal therapy studies. Pupils enjoy talking with the elderly. However, in some subjects it is not clear what pupils need to learn and how they will build up their knowledge.

Pupils have great empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. During the inspection, pupils were very excited when the headteacher revealed how much they had raised for children in need through cake sales and raffles.

Pupils love music. They produce thoughtful, personal scripts which they skilfully sing and rap to alongside the beats and music which they create. However, opportunities are somewhat limited for pupils to develop what they learn during work-based activities and gain qualifications for their work.

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

The school has come a long way in a short time. Senior leaders, the proprietors and governors are determined to make a difference to the lives of pupils. They are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe, engaged in learning and achieving.

Leaders have created a calm and purposeful school, where staff and pupils trust and respect each other. Staff are highly skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. They also help pupils to find ways to manage their own feelings and emotions.

Most pupils enter the school with weak skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics. Leaders provide lessons to improve pupils' skills in these areas. There are a few opportunities to learn through experience of work. These include hair and beauty, childcare, car valeting and car detailing, which involves repairing minor car bodywork damage.

The school works in partnership with local schools to widen the range of subjects available for pupils. For example, pupils studying GCSE subjects, such as psychology, benefit from specialist teaching in a local high school. However, the curriculum is still developing and lacks depth in some subjects, including English. For example, some pupils do not read as often as they could. A few have a limited appreciation of

books. Sometimes leaders do not make sure that they teach grammar, punctuation and spelling in a logical order. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow the GCSE curriculum for English and mathematics. However, in areas such as art, music and car detailing pupils do not gain any qualifications for their work. This does not help to prepare pupils as well as possible for the next stage of their learning or employment.

All pupils have special educational needs. Most full-time pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Pupils are well supported by the headteacher, who is a qualified special educational needs coordinator. Teachers and teaching assistants help pupils well. As a result, most pupils know more and remember more.

In mathematics, pupils develop their addition, multiplication and subtraction skills effectively. Pupils that we talked to said that mathematics is important because it helps them to calculate their spending when shopping and managing budgets.

Staff morale is high. All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire said that they enjoy working at the school and that senior leaders are considerate of their well-being. Typically, staff commented that 'it is a pleasure to be part of the team at Teenage Works'.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sufficiently well catered for. Pupils understand British values and ideas to do with democracy. They debate topical issues, such as Britain's exit from the European Union.

All staff consistently stick to the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Pupils follow the rules, behave well and listen to each other and staff. We saw an example of this during a discussion before pupils studying childcare went on their first visit to a nursery. Pupils asked sensible questions and fully appreciated the importance of acting maturely and safely while looking after young children.

Limited space is available for pupils to take part in sports and physical education at the school's premises. However, leaders ensure that pupils can use local sports centres and recreational facilities. In addition, pupils have access to professional coaches who help them to develop their boxing and martial arts skills.

The proprietor and senior leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles. They know the independent school standards and actively promote the health and welfare of pupils. Leaders also ensure that teachers and other staff have the skills they need to help pupils to gain new knowledge and make progress in different subjects. However, because the curriculum is not as carefully planned as it could be, pupils do not increase their understanding and develop their skills as deeply as they could in some subjects.

Pupils have frequent access to independent careers advice. This tells them about a wide range of careers choices. It also helps them to find out what skills and qualifications they will need to apply for different jobs, apprenticeships and further education courses. Careers education is also part of the curriculum for all pupils. Pupils learn how to present themselves in interviews and how to write letters to apply for jobs.

The proprietor has ensured that there is a plan in place to make access to the school for pupils with disabilities as easy as possible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders leave nothing to chance when it comes to safeguarding. They are highly trained and have excellent systems in place. Leaders collate information on pupils, including the most vulnerable, and help staff to minimise risks. All staff are trained to spot the signs of neglect and abuse. They know exactly what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of a pupil.

Staff work closely with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils at risk of harm are promptly given the support that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some curriculum plans, including those for English and art, do not clearly sequence learning or indicate what pupils should know and remember as they progress through key stages 3 and 4. As a result, pupils do not acquire secure enough knowledge in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that their curriculum plans and schemes of work clearly show what pupils need to learn and when.
- The curriculum in English lacks depth and does not develop pupils' writing skills as well as it could. Teachers do not have strong subject knowledge. Some pupils also have very few opportunities to read or develop an appreciation of books. As a result, a number of pupils do not make good progress in their learning in this subject. Senior leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in English is better designed and that teachers have the subject knowledge they need. This will help pupils to develop their reading and writing more effectively.
- Leaders recognise that the curriculum does not have clearly defined end goals in many subjects. Much of the work completed by pupils is not accredited. Leaders have plans in place to address this weakness. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to gain qualifications in a wide range of subjects to prepare them better for the next stage of their learning or employment.

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

School details

Unique reference number	146773
DfE registration number	353/6006
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10112084
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Number of part-time pupils	17
Proprietor	Teenage Works
Chair	James Clarke
Headteacher	Louise Hodson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,500–£18,500
Telephone number	0161 222 8168
Website	https://www.teenageworks.co.uk
Email address	louisehodson@teenageworks.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the school's first standard inspection since it was registered with the Department for Education in April 2019. The headteacher and pastoral leader are also the proprietors of the school.
- The school works in partnership with a number of local high schools, offering bespoke education programmes, usually of around six, 12 and 18 weeks, to pupils at risk of being permanently excluded from schools. In addition, the school currently provides for 18 full-time pupils, all of whom have been permanently excluded from schools.
- All pupils on role have special educational needs and/or disabilities including autism spectrum disorder, Asperger syndrome and complex social, emotional and mental health needs. Most full-time pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the headteacher, who is also responsible for overseeing the provision for pupils with SEND. We also met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and the welfare of pupils, attendance and behaviour management. A meeting with held with the school's music therapist.
- We met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. Telephone discussions were held with two parents and carers and representatives of schools and placing authorities.
- We met with a vice-principal from a local secondary school, a social worker, care support worker and two parents.
- We took account of four free-text responses to Parent View submitted during the inspection. We considered responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 10 members of staff and nine pupils.
- We focused deeply on English, mathematics, science and car detailing during the inspection. In each subject, we met with the subject leaders, teachers and tutors. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning.
- We met with pupils, teachers and other staff. We talked about safety, personal development and behaviour. We checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with children. We also talked with parents about matters relating to

safety. We scrutinised the school's safeguarding policy and related policies and documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Simon Hunter

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019