

Inspection of Taunton Deane Partnership College

Northfields, Bishops Hull, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5DR

Inspection dates: 3–4 December 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Taunton Deane Partnership College provides pupils with a calm and safe place where they learn to re-engage in their education. Pupils begin to understand the importance of education and the need to learn. This was summed up in the following comment from a pupil, 'I have high aspirations, I want a future.' Pupils appreciate the support and guidance they receive. They feel staff believe in them and that their future success is important to them.

Pupils feel safe and are confident that staff keep them safe. Pupils learn to trust staff and are able to share their worries and concerns. They are adamant that bullying does not happen. Pupils talk about the numerous ways staff help them to regulate their emotions. Consequently, pupils behave well.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Staff share the belief that all pupils will be successful in their learning. As a result, pupils achieve well and their gaps in knowledge are closing quickly.

The curriculum generally meets the needs of pupils. However, leaders recognise there is more work to do in developing the curriculum offer. At the moment, pupils do not have access to a wide range of vocational qualifications.

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

All pupils who attend this school are highly vulnerable and have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their previous experiences of education have not been positive. A lot of the pupils have had poor attendance. Some have had long gaps in their education.

Personal, social and health education is at the centre of the school's work. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils get the correct guidance and support to meet their needs. For example, leaders have worked hard with pupils to significantly reduce their nicotine intake. This work, along with the range of therapies available, is helping to reduce pupils' anxious behaviours and increase their ability to regulate their behaviour.

Relationships are a significant strength of the school. There is mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils describe how they now have a future because of the care and support they are given. As a result, on arrival to the school, pupils settle quickly. Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors could not speak highly enough of the school. They appreciate the difference that it has made to their child's life. Consequently, behaviour is good and pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to their learning. Attendance is also improving but leaders acknowledge this is still not good enough. They know that if pupils do not attend, this can have a detrimental effect on their achievement.

Leaders work hard to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of each pupil. Subjects are well planned and sequenced appropriately. There are high expectations that pupils will study subjects across the national curriculum and sit their GCSEs. This is because leaders are determined that pupils will be successful in returning to mainstream education and, therefore, want pupils to catch up and not fall behind their peers. Nevertheless, the curriculum for vocational studies is underdeveloped. Leaders have secure plans in place to ensure that they can offer vocational qualifications such as mechanics and hospitality, but these courses are not yet available to pupils.

The headteacher is determined that every pupil will be a fluent and confident reader. Phonics is taught effectively to ensure that younger pupils gain the knowledge they need to read well. Many older pupils have lost their love and enjoyment of reading. Staff are working hard to reignite pupils' enthusiasm, for example, having newspapers around for pupils to access when they arrive in school.

Leaders, including committee members, have an accurate understanding of what is and is not going well. However, they agree that their improvement plan lacks precision. It does not show clearly how actions are going to improve pupils' achievement and who is responsible for monitoring this work. Too often, it is left to the headteacher to implement the plan and monitor the effectiveness of actions taken.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Systems for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns are robust.

Staff receive regular updates on safeguarding in line with current legislation. They know what to do if they have any concerns or worries to minimise risk to pupils and keep them safe. Leaders have a strong focus on ensuring pupils' good mental health is a high priority in their work to safeguard pupils. Parents appreciate the support and guidance their children receive 'an absolute life saver' and 'my child is thriving' were typical comments made.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' improvement planning is not yet sufficiently precise in setting out the actions that need to be taken to improve the school. The plan does not show how, and by whom, these actions will be checked for their effectiveness. As a result, improvement work is not targeted or checked precisely enough to make the identified improvements. Leaders need to be more precise in their improvement planning, detailing who will make these checks.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum which is generally well planned. They acknowledge that more curriculum development is required in response to the needs of the pupils. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have access to an equally well-planned and sequenced curriculum for all subjects, particularly in vocational qualifications.
- Leaders are working hard to make sure that pupils attend school regularly. However, they acknowledge that, while improving, pupils do not attend as often as they should. Leaders need to ensure that robust strategies are in place to secure better attendance for all pupils.

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](#).

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

Unique reference number	134699
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10111518
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vicky Thomas
Headteacher	Kim Lawrence
Website	www.tauntondeanepartnershipcollege.org
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2018

Information about this school

- Taunton Deane Partnership College is located on three sites. The Taunton centre has been closed since the time of the previous inspection.
- Deane Discovery Centre caters for key stages 1 and 2. The Holway centre caters for key stages 3 and 4.
- The Northfields Education Centre caters for pupils in key stage 4 who are not able to attend school due to their medical or personal needs. A 'virtual classroom' for pupils who are not able to attend the school in person due their medical or personal needs runs out of Northfield and Holway bases.
- The school provides outreach support to primary and secondary schools in the Taunton area.

Information about this inspection

- We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- We held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, leaders of the centres, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, and a sample of

teaching and support staff.

- During the inspection, we visited each of the three centres and the forest school.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with three committee members, including the chair.
- We examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, and documentation relating to behaviour.
- A significant proportion of the inspection focused on ensuring that pupils are safe. Inspectors scrutinised training records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge, and spoke with pupils about their safety and well-being. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's reading, mathematics, art and personal social and health education. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from Somerset Children's Services and the school improvement partner.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at various times during the day and reviewed attendance information.
- The lead inspector spoke with several parents and carers on the telephone, to gain their views of the school. We reviewed two responses to the online survey, Parent View, and additional free-text comments. We reviewed the 32 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy French

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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