

Inspection of Turning Point Academy NW

Essex House, Bridle Road, Bootle, Sefton L30 4UE

Inspection dates: 10–12 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

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?

Parents and carers describe Turning Point Academy as a 'lifeline'. Pupils describe the school as 'amazing'. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. During the inspection, pupils behaved exceptionally well in class, during assemblies and when talking with inspectors about their learning.

Pupils' attendance significantly improves as soon as they start at the school. Pupils say that they always feel safe in school. They understand about discrimination and bullying. They say that neither of these take place at this school.

Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Staff also form strong and trusting bonds with pupils. As a result, pupils try hard and become increasingly resilient. This helps them to make strong progress in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects.

Pupils enjoy ice-skating, visiting museums and going to the theatre. Pupils told us about their visit to Manley Mere. During a trip to London, they had a tour of the Houses of Parliament.

Pupils raise funds for good causes. For example, they have supported local homeless charities. Recently, pupils donated their old teddy bears to children in Syria. Pupils understand democratic principles and like to present their views on the school council.

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

The principal and proprietor have a strong vision for the school. They want the school to be a haven where pupils can thrive and realise their potential. All at Turning Point live the school motto, which is, 'Belong, commit and accomplish.'

The school has got off to an excellent start. The principal, vice-principal and almost all staff have many years' experience working with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One of the principal's main priorities has been to improve pupils' behaviour and ensure their readiness for learning. He has achieved this. Pupils' workbooks provide evidence of their excellent work ethic and strong progress.

Senior leaders have created an ambitious curriculum. Most planning sets out clearly what pupils will learn and when. Almost all pupils start at the school with significant gaps in their learning. This is mainly due to poor attendance. Some pupils have been out of school for more than two years. Others have had repeated exclusions throughout their primary and secondary school years.

Pupils develop their knowledge in a wide range of subjects including English, mathematics, art and science. They also achieve well in subjects such as business and enterprise, food technology, outdoor pursuits and physical education (PE). The

school's 'life skills' curriculum supports pupils' good progress in the personal, social, health and citizenship aspects of learning.

The principal understands the importance of work-based learning and provides 'in-house' work experience and training. For example, pupils enjoy food technology and childcare, for which they acquire vocational certificates. In other subjects, pupils learning is 'mapped' to the national curriculum. Pupils also gain functional skills awards in English and mathematics.

Pupils' artwork is of an exceptionally high standard. This is seen in their carefully executed Cubist work in the style of Pablo Picasso and Surrealist compositions after the work of Salvador Dali. In mathematics and science, pupils develop their understanding and skills well. In English, pupils can use language creatively, particularly in descriptive writing.

In computing, pupils learn good word-processing skills. They also learn how to use different software programmes to manipulate pictures and text competently. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop coding skills. Currently the school does not have a lead teacher for computing.

Currently, responsibilities for subject leadership rest with the principal and vice-principal. Senior leaders are providing training and assigning subject responsibilities to all teachers.

The proprietor knows the school very well and has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. She supports staff effectively to make sure that the quality of education provided by the school is good. The proprietor has set out a clear plan to make access to the school as easy as possible for pupils with disabilities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well catered for. Pupils understand British values and democratic principles. This was evident as pupils confidently presented their thoughtful and well-informed manifestos to their peers on the day of the United Kingdom general election.

Staff follow the school's behaviour policy and help pupils to maintain outstanding behaviour. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and help pupils to develop coping strategies when learning becomes difficult.

All staff are well qualified to carry out their roles effectively. Staff morale is exceptionally high. Typically, those who completed Ofsted's staff survey commented, 'I love working here; it's like having a second family', and, 'I really enjoy seeing how much the children achieve.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Designated safeguarding leaders, including the principal and the proprietor, are trained to a very high standard. They are well organised and have highly efficient 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)

- Leaders have ensured that almost all curriculum plans carefully detail what pupils should know and understand as they progress through key stages 2, 3 and 4. However, the curriculum for computing is somewhat limited. The principal, with the full support of the proprietor, is in the process of employing a specialist teacher with experience of teaching computing. Leaders should hasten this process to ensure that pupils develop a broad range of skills in computing.
- Currently, all subjects are led by the principal and vice-principal. This is an interim measure and each teacher has been assigned subject responsibilities. Leaders should ensure that each teacher is equipped with the knowledge and skills that they need to oversee the successful implementation of the curriculum in their subject areas.

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

School details

Unique reference number	146569
DfE registration number	343/6002
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10102273
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Number of part-time pupils	4
Chair and proprietor	Pamela Constance
Headteacher	Mike Marshall
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,000
Telephone number	0151 345 7750
Website	www.turningpointacad.co.uk
Email address	mike.marshall@turningpointadacd.co.uk
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 January 2019. The school is registered as Turning Point Academy NW Limited. There is a sole proprietor, who is also one of three trustees for the school.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have a range of special educational needs, including autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- 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 principal and vice-principal, who are responsible for leading most aspects of the school, including the curriculum, special educational needs, safeguarding and the welfare of pupils.
- We met with the proprietor and spoke with parents, local authority representatives and a senior leader from a local secondary school.
- We took account of 11 free-text messages and 10 responses to Parent View during the inspection. We considered responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 10 members of staff and nine pupils. We also considered the school's own surveys of parents', pupils' and staff views.
- We focused deeply on English, mathematics, science and art. 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 pupils' 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

Naomi Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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