

# Inspection of Tor Bridge High

Miller Way, Estover, Plymouth, Devon PL6 8UN

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Inspection dates: 16 and 17 November 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The 'small school' model at Tor Bridge High means that pupils are well known by staff and feel that they have someone they can go to for support. Most pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe. However, a small number feel that bullying is not dealt with well by all staff when it happens.

Teachers' high expectations of pupils mean that work is well presented and completed to a high standard. The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that they have access to all subjects. The sixth form offers a range of qualifications, both vocational and academic, which meet the needs of students.

Lessons run after school, known as 'period 6', provide extra support for all subjects. A wide range of activities are planned for pupils throughout their time at the school. Some of these have not been able to happen recently due to COVID-19.

The school prides itself on learning free from disruption. Poor behaviour is dealt with promptly by staff. Pupils begin tasks quickly in lessons and are calm around the school site.

Many pupils say they enjoy the books chosen for guided reading, which they do several times a week. They would like more time to discuss the issues they read about, particularly students in the sixth form.

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

Leaders have re-designed the curriculum in all subjects to make sure that it is ambitious for all pupils. They have taken steps to increase the historically low number of pupils who continue with both a humanities subject and a language into key stage 4. However, this number is still relatively low. Leaders have clear plans to build pupils' literacy and their understanding of the wider world, so that they experience a wide range of vocabulary, cultures and ideas over time.

Teachers ensure that most pupils, particularly those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, remember more over time. However, teaching in some subjects does not consistently allow pupils to fully develop their understanding by applying what they know.

Staff and pupils have strong relationships. Students in the sixth form are particularly positive about the way they are supported by teachers. Pupils follow school routines and are aware of the consequences of not meeting the high expectations set for them. However, leaders' analysis of information about the small number of pupils who repeatedly display poor behaviour is not precise enough. This means that leaders are not always identifying and tackling the root causes quickly enough.

Teachers help pupils to prepare for life in modern Britain through the curriculum and the guided reading programme. Pupils learn about issues such as healthy relationships, positive mental health and diversity. The school organises assemblies, external visitors and trips to local universities to enhance learning in these areas. Where gaps in learning caused by COVID-19 have been identified, action is being taken to close them. Some pupils, particularly girls, say that they would value more opportunities to learn about life beyond school.

Leaders have sought external support from a variety of local and national organisations. This has helped them develop a clear vision for the school and to identify ways to bring about improvement. They have focused on improving behaviour so that learning is not interrupted. Staff value the steps that leaders have taken to manage workload through streamlining systems and making time for shared planning.

The careers programme helps pupils to move on to the right destinations when they leave school. Links to future employment possibilities are included in the curriculum for each subject. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know how to refer concerns they may have to leaders. Those staff who have additional safeguarding responsibilities have significant further training to support them. Staff make referrals to other agencies when needed and the school challenges decisions that they do not feel are in the best interests of pupils. The school is increasingly proactive in working with parents early on to prevent situations from becoming worse.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some pupils, particularly girls, say they would value more opportunities to prepare for life after school. A small number display intolerant attitudes to those who are different from them. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum prepares all pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders' analysis of attendance and behaviour data is sometimes not thorough enough. As a result, they do not accurately identify patterns and so cannot take actions needed to bring about change. Leaders need to develop a systematic approach to ensure they use all the available information to identify issues so that they can address these more promptly.

- Sometimes teaching does not allow pupils to deepen their understanding as far as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to consolidate and apply their knowledge over time and in a variety of contexts.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 school and 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137206
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200984
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1258
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Nicola Dowrick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Roser
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.torbridge.net">www.torbridge.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Tor Bridge High is a large secondary school.
- There are a larger proportion of pupils with SEND or an education, health and care plan than the national average.
- There are significantly fewer pupils who speak English as an additional language than the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision at Discovery College and Construction Training South West.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and trustees. Meetings were also held with curriculum leaders, heads of school, teachers (including early career teachers) and the special educational need and/or disabilities coordinator. Inspectors contacted the alternative provision used by the school.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, languages, design and technology and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Hickling	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Houghton	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Aykin	Her Majesty's Inspector

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