

Inspection of The Telford Priory School

New Road, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford, Shropshire TF2 7AB

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils who attend The Telford Priory School are happy and enjoy their lessons. Teachers build positive relationships with pupils and want the best for them. Over the last few years, leaders have established a clearer set of expectations for both staff and pupils alike.

Pupils usually behave well. In lessons and corridors there is a calm and purposeful environment. At social times, pupils play together sensibly. However, not all staff deal with behaviour incidents in a consistent way. Some pupils, parents and carers say that they do not have confidence in staff to deal with bullying incidents effectively.

Leaders have developed the school curriculum to set out the order in which topics are taught for each subject. However, there is variability in how it is taught. This does not help pupils know and remember more long term. Not enough time is given to the school's 'global citizenship' curriculum for pupils' personal development.

There are many different extra-curricular clubs for pupils to participate in, including various sports, performing and visual arts clubs. A large number of pupils are also part of the school's choir and regularly perform at local community events. The school has also recently staged a performance of 'Little Shop of Horrors'.

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

The school has made progress since the previous inspection. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have strengthened the curriculum so that there is greater ambition for what pupils are expected to know and understand. However, there is still more work to do so that the school improves.

In many subjects, the curriculum is well structured and sequenced. Middle leaders have thought carefully about the order in which topics are taught and how ideas connect across lessons. In art, for example, pupils learn about the colour wheel in Year 7 before moving on to more complex vocabulary to describe tints, tones and hues in Year 8. In this subject, pupils enjoy their learning and make strong progress.

While the curriculum sets out what pupils should learn, there remains too much variability in the way subjects are taught. In some lessons, learning materials, such as the school's 'curriculum entitlement booklets', are not used effectively. This does not help pupils to know and remember more of what they have been taught. In addition, some teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to discuss their learning and attempt tasks independently. As a result, some pupils lack confidence in being able to complete activities on their own.

Leaders have put in place a programme of support to help those pupils with weak reading skills. Teachers provide effective support to help pupils decode new words

and develop their knowledge of phonics. There is also a well-structured curriculum in place for pupils who form part of the school's 'accelerated learner' groups.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Learning plans are regularly reviewed so that they accurately reflect the needs of each individual. Teaching assistants are used effectively in the classroom to help support pupils with their learning. Pupils with SEND participate well in lessons.

At present, the uptake of languages at key stage 4 remains low. Leaders took the deliberate decision to reduce the number of pupils who could take languages at GCSE level because of historical issues with the quality of teaching. Since this time, the curriculum in languages has improved. Although the number of pupils who study languages at key stage 4 remains relatively low, this is steadily rising. Leaders have plans to increase numbers still further.

In lessons, pupils are usually well behaved and respectful to their teachers. However, there are inconsistencies in the way staff implement the school's behaviour policy. Pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying and the use of derogatory language were not always dealt with effectively. Although the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions is decreasing, it remains high. Leaders recognise the need to strengthen their support for pupils' behaviour further.

The number of pupils who are absent or persistently absent from school is too high. Leaders have recently strengthened their attendance systems with the appointment of a new member of pastoral staff. However, they are not analysing attendance data thoroughly enough to spot patterns and trends quickly to reduce absence.

The school's 'global citizenship' programme has been carefully planned to cover aspects of relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education, citizenship and character development. Leaders have provided training to staff on how to deliver topics and have also adjusted plans to take account of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the curriculum map shows where topics will be covered, this is not being delivered effectively. Leaders are not providing enough curriculum time for pupils to discuss complex issues in sufficient depth and the delivery of lessons is inconsistent. Pupils therefore do not fully understand issues such as prejudice and discrimination.

Leaders have planned how pupils will receive careers advice and guidance in each year group. Although this is at an early stage of development, pupils are receiving effective information about careers through their form tutor sessions. There are also opportunities to go on visits, such as a recent trip for Year 11 pupils to the University of Wolverhampton.

Many parents value the work the school does to support their child and the range of additional activities that are on offer. However, a proportion of parents in response to Ofsted Parent View expressed concern about the school's communication and the way it deals with behaviour. The headteacher has already held a meeting with

parents and has established a parent forum group to address some of these concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear processes and systems in place for safeguarding pupils. Leaders undertake appropriate checks on staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding, including half-termly sessions on issues such as harmful sexual behaviour and domestic abuse. There are also fortnightly briefing sessions to keep staff informed of any emerging issues. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders ensure that pupils receive help and support in a timely way if needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not use materials, such as work booklets, consistently well to implement the curriculum. Additionally, some teachers do not provide sufficient time for pupils to explore and develop ideas in lessons. This means that pupils struggle to remember what they have learned, and their knowledge of topics is not always secure. Leaders should ensure that teaching resources, alongside discussion, are used effectively in lessons.
- Some pupils do not behave as well as they should. Incidents of bullying and the use of derogatory language are not tackled consistently well by staff. Furthermore, suspensions and permanent exclusions remain high. Leaders should take steps to ensure that staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and all pupils feel confident reporting incidents.
- Too many pupils are absent or persistently absent from school. This has a negative impact on their progress in the curriculum and does not establish strong routines for when they leave school. Leaders should scrutinise and evaluate attendance data more closely in order that pupil absence reduces.
- The 'global citizenship' curriculum is not delivered well. Not enough time is given to covering statutory guidance effectively and there are inconsistencies in how this is delivered. Leaders should ensure that they strengthen the school's personal development curriculum to ensure it is of a high quality for all pupils.
- A significant proportion of parents have a negative view of the school. They do not always support the actions that leaders take. Leaders should continue to strengthen their engagement with parents to help foster a more positive relationship between the school and the local community.

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

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| Unique reference number | 142285 |
| Local authority | Telford & Wrekin |
| Inspection number | 10225494 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 996 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Simon Atkins |
| Headteacher | Stacey Jordan |
| Website | www.telfordprioryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 18 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Community Academies Trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, languages, art and design. Inspectors examined leaders' plans, visited lessons,

looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer, members of the school's standards committee, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

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