

Tameside Pupil Referral Service

Globe Lane, Dukinfield, Cheshire SK16 4UJ

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The leadership has not taken decisive enough action to tackle the staffing issues within the service. Pockets of low expectation and a reluctance to embrace change remain. As a result, the service is not improving as quickly as it should and this is affecting the achievement of pupils.
- Pupils' progress is uneven through the service. This is most evident at key stage 3 where pupils are not making the progress they could.
- There are differences in the quality of provision between sites and in some subjects. Most significant is the disparity in the consistency of high-quality teaching and learning.
- The curriculum, particularly, but not exclusively, in key stage 3, does not inspire or engage pupils as much as it could. It does not spark their interest or aspirations enough to make them want to learn. This is most evident in English and mathematics.
- There is not a sufficiently strategic view of the progress and achievements of all pupils, personally, emotionally and in terms of resilience.
- Expectations of pupils' learning in lessons are not consistently high enough, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Some teachers are not using the assessment information available to pinpoint what should be taught to support pupils' learning and move them on further.
- Pupils are not engaged in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. They are uninterested because they do not see the purpose of learning in these subjects.
- Pupils are sometimes bored and aimless at breaktimes.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have worked extremely hard and largely successfully to improve the school.
- By the end of Year 11, pupils make good progress. They are offered good careers advice and vocational placements with a range of alternative providers.
- Attendance has improved and exclusions have significantly reduced in the last year.
- The school motto 'Learn today, earn tomorrow' typifies the school's approach of offering pupils good-quality opportunities to experience the world of work.
- Pupils' care, welfare and well-being are paramount. Safeguarding is effective. Parents, carers and pupils feel that they are very safe and well cared for.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations for all pupils' learning and what they can achieve
 - use assessment more precisely in lessons to match work to pupils' abilities and ensure that they are supported to move on in their learning
 - harness a sense of purpose and engagement in English and mathematics, similar to that created in other subjects.

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - decisive action is taken to stabilise staffing
 - all pupils benefit from being taught by high-quality teaching staff
 - the curriculum is sufficiently engaging, inspiring and purposeful for pupils, particularly, but not exclusively, those in key stage 3
 - leaders work together strategically to establish a clear, consistent view of the progress and achievements of pupils, personally, emotionally and in terms of their resilience.

- Further improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that:
 - provision for pupils at breaktimes offers more interest and purpose.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The principal, senior leaders and the management committee have worked extremely hard to improve the provision and in many respects they have been successful. However, leadership and management require improvement, because decisive enough action has not been taken to remedy the issues in staffing that have resulted in an inconsistency of practice and low expectations in some parts of the service.
- Despite leaders' best efforts, a small number of staff have not embraced the well-thought-out changes and improvements across the school as much as they should. For example, the agreed assessment policy is not adhered to sufficiently by all staff. Relationships are fractious amongst a very small minority of staff and this is impeding the progress of the service and most importantly the achievement of pupils.
- The provision is currently beset by frequent staff absence and temporary staff. Although some supply staff have worked in the school for a while, this still impedes leaders being able to instil sufficiently high expectations. This is in terms of how staff teach, how they use assessment to support pupils' learning, and how they encourage pupils to have a positive attitude to learning. It has also delayed some valuable aspects of improvement being implemented, for example developing a cross-site approach to emotional literacy.
- Leaders have worked tirelessly to establish a consistent approach to academic assessment across the whole school. Largely, key stages 2 and 4 use this information well to inform leaders about how well pupils are doing and what they need to do next. However, assessment is used less effectively at key stage 3. Additionally, leaders are keen to develop a means by which they can measure the non-academic progress of pupils. To this end, they are developing a way to assess personal development, emotional literacy and the self-reliance of pupils. However, this development has stalled due to staffing issues. The assessment information that is available is used quite disparately across the school. Leaders have not brought this information together sufficiently to gain a holistic picture of each individual pupil on which to base further improvements.
- An appropriate range of subjects is taught at key stages 2, 3 and 4. Food technology, music, art and physical education (PE) are popular and well taught. In particular, the art department enables pupils to reach a good standard. This is evident in the generally good quality and varied art work around the school. However, overall the curriculum, particularly, but not exclusively, for key stage 3, is not sufficiently engaging. For example, in English and mathematics the curriculum does not offer pupils a sense of purpose to encourage them to want to learn.
- The key stage 4 vocational curriculum is stronger. All pupils are offered taster sessions in areas such as mechanics, construction, hospitality, music technology and hair and beauty. As part of these activities, pupils are involved in enterprise experiences where, for example, they sell produce and have the opportunity to work in a local café. These sessions, combined with good careers guidance, enable staff to develop appropriate pathways to support the next stage of pupils' education.

- The coordination of alternative providers and work experience for pupils is good. Systems for safeguarding and monitoring pupils' daily attendance are appropriate. The service regularly check providers to ensure that individual pupils' learning, emotional and welfare needs are met.
- The effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that, overall, the school is a calm and considerate environment where pupils usually mix together happily. Pupils are actively involved in the school community: for instance, they raise funds for charities. Alongside assemblies and the personal development curriculum, this helps them understand the school's and British values. Pupils learn about the wider community, the rule of law, the importance of tolerance and the need to respect differences.
- Leaders have established daily briefing sessions, which include teachers who work with pupils on other sites. As a result, staff have a thorough knowledge of the day-to-day personal and social needs of pupils. All staff have benefitted from being involved in good-quality weekly training sessions. This has been instrumental in ensuring consistency in areas such as behaviour management and the reward system. For example, the 'random act of kindness' award.
- Leaders are honest in their views about the school and their self-evaluation is accurate. The school is led by an experienced, knowledgeable principal and ably assisted by her head of centres. Together they have a clear vision. The service motto 'Learn today, earn tomorrow' lives through the school's approach, highlighting the connection of learning, working and the experiences that pupils are offered to make and sell products.
- The use of pupil premium funding is uneven and not fully effective. It is most successfully used to support the learning and achievement of disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 4. Funding is used in a variety of ways, particularly in supporting pupils' attendance and social and emotional well-being. However, it is not used effectively enough to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils, including those in key stage 3, achieve as well as they could.
- The leadership and organisation of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Identification of their needs is thorough and resources are of a good standard. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' learning and welfare needs and every effort is made to remove any barriers to support their learning. The service and local authority have worked hard to resolve issues identified at the time of the previous inspection with regards to meeting the needs of the small group of key stage 2 pupils that required education and health care (EHC) plans. These plans are now close to completion and appropriate school placements have been secured for this coming September.

Governance of the school

- The management committee has worked hard with the principal and local authority to resolve pressing issues related to staffing since the last inspection. However, this has taken up much of its time and commitment. In the meantime, although the committee has wanted to, it has not been able to keep a close enough eye on the achievement of all pupils throughout the whole school.

- Individual members of the management committee offer a good range of expertise. They are conscientious in their responsibilities, ask appropriate questions to challenge leaders and enjoy taking part and contributing to the life of the school when they can.
- The management committee is rightly confident about the positive impact that pupil premium funding has on disadvantaged pupils by the time they reach the end of Year 11. However, because disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could across the whole school, they have not been as effective as they could be in monitoring the impact of pupil premium funding for all pupils.
- The management committee has a good understanding of performance management procedures and supports the principal effectively in ensuring the management of teachers' pay.
- The management committee is diligent in carrying out its responsibilities to safeguard pupils and, to this end, has appointed a safeguarding lead to oversee and monitor safeguarding and welfare-related matters.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in the school. Leaders have ensured that pupils have a safe and secure environment by promoting the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility effectively. Detailed safeguarding records are meticulously kept and regularly reviewed to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Staff and members of the management committee undertake appropriate training, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism.
- Regular checks are completed on all pupils who attend alternative provision or work-experience placements. A cycle of visits is made by school staff, and safeguarding procedures are monitored.
- A dedicated team for pastoral support, including a highly effective attendance officer and acting pastoral support coordinator, oversees the care and welfare of vulnerable pupils and their families. The team offers excellent support and is highly valued.
- Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Highly effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met. Pupils were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning requires improvement because it is inconsistent across the school.
- In subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics, including vocational subjects, teaching and learning are stronger; pupils enjoy their learning and are taught by teachers who are using assessment information carefully to meet their needs and

aspirations. However, in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly, but not exclusively, at key stage 3, teaching and learning are much weaker. Consequently, pupils are getting an inconsistent educational deal.

- Not all pupils benefit from the same high expectations of learning that ensure that they are eager and receptive to learn. A new appointment in the mathematics department indicates that there are the beginnings of improvements in this subject, but this has not had an impact across the whole service as yet. Pupils' work books in English and mathematics show that the standard of work expected is too low.
- English and mathematics activities do not 'hook them in' to their learning. Too many lessons have little interest or a sense of purpose for pupils. As a result, some pupils are passive and apathetic about aspects of their learning. They are reluctant to sit down to their work, and are easily distracted. By contrast, where expectations are higher and well matched to their needs and interests, pupils are ambitious about what they can achieve. For example, in food technology, pupils are keen to do their best because they know adults will support them in their learning. They are excited by the goals that they set alongside their teacher because their aspirations are well catered for and inspire them to work hard.
- Some teachers check on pupils' learning regularly. By continually checking individual pupils' understanding, adults make an important contribution to securing the progress pupils make in their subject areas. However some teachers, although purporting to adhere to the agreed ways of assessing and checking the day-to-day progress of pupils, are not doing so. These teachers do not use the assessment information that is gathered effectively to plan lessons that precisely match the next steps pupils need to take in their learning. In some cases, pupils are making little progress and a few are regressing.
- Where learning is most effective, activities are well organised and teachers are well prepared. Teachers skilfully pick up what a pupil likes, what interests them and what will spark their curiosity to learn. They then put a good-quality package of learning together for each pupil. Teachers are quick to settle pupils and know exactly where they are in their learning for that day. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Questioning is used effectively to encourage pupils to talk, draw out their thinking and help them move on in their learning. Pupils are visibly proud of their achievements.
- Leaders believe in fostering trusting and respectful relationships with pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This has laid foundations for good learning to take place. Pupils feel cared for and listened to. There is a strong sense of nurture, so pupils feel safe and secure.
- Teaching assistants are hard-working and skilful at calming pupils, encouraging them to learn and trying to engage them in their work. Their friendly but firm approach is appreciated by pupils. Pupils respond well to them and draw reassurance from their consistent approach.
- All parents who spoke to the inspector felt that their children were well taught. They felt the quality of information given to them about their children's learning was good and valuable. They appreciated the very regular contact the school had with them about their child, often via a telephone call.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This is because pupils' personal development and welfare are central to the work of the school. Teachers' and other adults' thorough knowledge of pupils and the strong relationships they build ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils can rebuild their confidence and develop their resilience.
- Staff treat pupils with consideration and work hard to ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcome and valued. Adults model respectful and caring behaviour in the way they engage with pupils. In turn, pupils mirror this behaviour in some of the activities and events they get involved in, such as making afternoon teas for local community groups.
- There are a range of good quality opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in personal and emotional development. Adults are proactive and upfront in their approach to tackling issues that are pertinent to pupils, such as knife crime and drug use. For example, Summit, the service's outdoor education provision, successfully involves specialist outside agencies who work with pupils on issues such as sexting and showing respect between boys and girls. In music technology, a group of pupils produced a short film, raising awareness of the dangers of being involved in gang cultures. It is intended that this video will be used with young people across the local authority.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors praised the school and the work of the staff. Parents felt their children were safe, happier than in previous schools, and looked after well. Parents were keen to say that it was the 'first time [their] child had had some success'. They also felt staff were 'approachable', 'supportive' and did their best for their children. Parents particularly appreciated the 'Thursday phone call' from staff that shares good news stories about their child.
- Pupils told inspectors that for them it was the 'first time school has been okay'. As a pupil said, 'They listen to us and give us a chance to explain ourselves'. In a recent school survey, a pupil commented, 'You treat us like we're your children and you want the best for us'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- It is without doubt that leaders have worked extremely hard and successfully to address the issues with behaviour that were a feature of the service in the past. As a result, incidents are much less frequent and the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced by an impressive two thirds compared to the previous year.
- However, some low-level disruption remains in lessons where a few pupils struggle to settle and wander the classroom or the corridors. This is predominantly evident in English and mathematics, because these lessons are not capturing the interest of pupils or meeting their individual learning needs.

- This behaviour is not seen everywhere. In subjects other than English and mathematics, such as PE and art or in the afternoon's vocational activities, there is very little disruptive behaviour in lessons. Learning is more personalised and so more closely meets pupils' learning needs, interests and aspirations. For example, key stage 4 pupils were enthralled by making bird boxes. They listened responsively to instructions, used machinery sensibly and had a mature regard for health and safety.
- Overall, pupils move around all the school sites in a friendly manner. Adults are good at managing pupils' movement around the school buildings. They use calm and effective strategies, aimed at distracting, defusing or calming a situation down.
- Although pupils behave in a relaxed, cordial manner and adults are deployed appropriately, there is very little on offer for pupils to engage them or encourage them to expend energy at breaktimes. The grounds are spacious and there is an all-weather pitch and places to sit and talk at White Bridge. Boxes of games had been put out at Elmbridge, but adults did not encourage their use. As a consequence of leaving pupils to their own devices, a group of White Bridge pupils went to the far end of the playground, away from adults, and started smoking. This situation was dealt with appropriately by staff.
- The systems for monitoring absence are meticulous and thorough. Despite the diverse nature of the provision, including placements at a range of alternative providers, leaders can account for every pupil on their register. As a result of hard work, attendance has improved across the school and is now closer to national averages for pupil referral units. The attendance officer and pastoral team provide good-quality liaison between families, the school and professionals who offer support to those who need it. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in the school. There is a group of pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders work diligently with this group and their parents to address this issue, with notable successes.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement, because the progress of pupils is inconsistent across the service. Expectations are not high enough for all pupils and so some do not achieve as well as they could.
- Leaders have devised a good-quality assessment system that is effective where it is implemented. However, it has not been fully applied to best effect at the Elmbridge site, particularly for key stage 3 pupils. As a result, the assessment system is not used well enough to support these pupils to achieve sufficiently. This is evident from the school's internal checks on progress, which indicates that pupil's progress, particularly at key stage 3, lags behind others.
- Key stage 2 pupils make better progress over time. Internal assessments indicate that their reading ages are improving and that they are making reasonable progress in mathematics and writing. This is confirmed by looking at pupils' work in books and displays on the classroom wall.
- Pupils make good progress by the end of key stage 4. This is because, for the older key stage 4 pupils, the assessment system to follow and capture the progress of Year 11 pupils is used more effectively. A more personalised approach to learning, linked to

awards and accreditation, ensures that leaders and teachers tap into pupils' interests and then use these to create a package of courses leading to qualifications. As one parent said of her son, 'I never thought he would get a qualification: now he has.'

- Apart from requiring that pupils study for qualifications in English and mathematics, leaders offer a range of subjects, including vocational areas. All courses contribute towards functional skills, entry-level qualifications or GCSEs. All courses are determined by each individual pupil's particular interests and ambition. A growing number are entered for, and succeed in gaining, GCSEs.
- Leaders rightly believe it is important to have a holistic overview of pupils' achievement, both academically and in terms of their personal and emotional development. The school has also recently identified that pupils lack the resilience to cope in a variety of situations. They have begun to explore systems to track pupils' progress in these areas. However, the leaders who have been appointed to instigate this improvement are absent.
- The school provides an appropriate and improving quality of careers guidance. Teachers encourage pupils to be realistic but ambitious in their plans for the future. They are helped to make informed choices that support them in reaching their goals by running popular and successful careers fairs for both key stages 3 and 4. Most pupils take up a place at college or training. A small number take up apprenticeships. Pupils have followed careers as diverse as mechanics, music and the military.
- Inspection evidence indicates that there is a mixed picture of progress among disadvantaged pupils. However, the school works hard to break down barriers such as low attendance and meet social and emotional needs. By the time these pupils reach the end of Year 11, they make good progress.
- The school meets the needs well of the small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with a statement of SEN or EHC plan so that they make progress at least in line with their peers. The school has been quick to recognise that a number of pupils have previously unidentified SEN and/or disabilities and put in place appropriate support.
- As soon as pupils and parents join the service, leaders immediately identify a pathway towards re-integration. As a result of this thoughtful approach, increasing numbers of pupils are returning to mainstream education and do well.

School details

Unique reference number	137322
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10048976

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Elaine Horridge
Principal	Maureen Brettell
Telephone number	0161 214 8484
Website	www.tprs.tameside.sch.uk
Email address	wbc.admin@tprs.tameside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2018

Information about this school

- Tameside Pupil Referral Service was formed in 2011. It caters for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools and also provides education for a small group of key stage 4 pupils who have an EHC plan for social, emotional and mental health needs. These pupils have a discrete base within the key stage 4 site, but are integrated with all other pupils wherever appropriate.
- The school comprises three sites. Elmbridge School offers provision for key stage 2 and 3 pupils. White Bridge College offers provision for key stage 4 pupils and the Ryecroft site offers one to one or small group support for pupils who find it difficult to be part of a larger group. Summit, an outdoor provision, is also located at the Ryecroft site and is accessed by the vast majority of pupils who attend the service.
- The school mainly serves the Tameside area although a small number of pupils arrive from out of the borough. Pupils often join the school part way through a school year, many in key stage 4. There has also been an influx of key stage 2 pupils.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. A number of these have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- There is an above-average proportion of pupils who have an EHC plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups being below the national average.
- Boys considerably outnumber girls.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- The school uses a range of alternative providers. These are currently Works 4 U, Tameside College, Active Tameside, GMAP and Broadstones.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors also observed pupils during morning breaks.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books, assessment files and case studies.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, head of centre for White Bridge College, assistant head and middle leaders. They also spoke with the shadow special educational needs lead, the attendance and engagement mentor and the acting pastoral support coordinator, as well as the person responsible for safeguarding checks.
- An inspector met with the chair of the management committee. She also met with three representatives of the local authority.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire, but inspectors met with small groups or individual pupils to discuss their opinions about the school and their learning. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. They also talked informally with staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. However, an inspector spoke briefly with a few parents on the telephone.
- An inspector also spoke with a small representative sample of alternative providers with which this school has worked.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: minutes of meetings of the management committee; information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance; and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Naomi Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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