

TBAP Aspire AP Academy

Commonside Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 7EZ

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Certain checks of the suitability of staff appointed to work with pupils are not carried out routinely.
- Child protection records are poorly maintained. There are no systematic procedures to record the actions taken to protect pupils from harm.
- Too many pupils have poor attendance, and leaders are unaware of where all pupils are. This represents a significant safeguarding concern.
- Pupils' poor behaviour and attitudes in lessons disrupt teaching. This prevents them from making sufficient progress. Not enough staff are suitably trained to manage challenging behaviour.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are not recorded systematically or analysed routinely to inform actions to make improvements.
- There is an over-reliance on temporary staff because many senior leaders, teachers and support staff are not in school due to sickness absence.
- School and trust leaders have not done enough to resolve the areas for improvement noted at the time of the school's previous inspection.
- There are no robust procedures in place to assess how well pupils are progressing.
- The pupil premium is not used effectively to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.
- Poor relations between staff and the trust are undermining the school's capacity to improve. Some staff do not have confidence in the trust to secure improvement.
- The local governing board provides very limited support or challenge for leaders to make improvements.
- Governors do not protect staff and pupils by ensuring that all fire safety requirements are met.
- The trust board does not monitor the school's work closely enough. Consequently, its view of the school's effectiveness is inaccurate.

The school has the following strengths

- Effective teaching and learning, combined with good-quality care, enable primary-aged pupils to re-engage in learning and achieve well.
- Recent interim arrangements, including a seconded interim head of school, made by the trust to bolster the school's leadership are beginning to have a positive impact.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take immediate action to safeguard all pupils by:
 - ensuring that all necessary checks are made when appointing staff to work in the school
 - ensuring that all temporary staff are suitably trained and inducted to work in this setting
 - systematically overhauling the child protection records of every pupil so that leaders demonstrate that they are doing everything they can to protect pupils from harm, and monitoring these records at regular intervals to ensure pupils' safety
 - maintaining clear, coherent records of the provision made for every pupil, especially those on part-time timetables, those who are taught at home and those who are taught off-site in alternative provision
 - tightening procedures to check the whereabouts of all pupils absent from school
 - making sure that the school's procedures to raise attendance and reduce persistent absence are effective.
- Raise achievement by:
 - gaining far greater stability in staffing and reducing the reliance on temporary staff
 - effectively reasserting the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour in lessons
 - raising expectations of what pupils are capable of doing and providing them with suitably challenging work to do
 - establishing robust procedures for assessing how well pupils are doing from their starting points on entry to the school so that leaders can illustrate clearly whether pupils achieve as well as they should
 - using assessments to inform where further support is needed to enable all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to make stronger progress than they do currently
 - making effective use of pupil premium funding
 - sharing the good practice evident in teaching in key stages 1 and 2 across the school.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - establishing a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour and providing staff

with high-quality training in applying the school's agreed behaviour policy

- systematically recording all behaviour incidents and analysing this information routinely to inform leaders' actions to make improvements
- implementing robust procedures for following up pupils' absence and doing much more to effectively reduce the high rates of persistent absence.

■ Improve the school's leadership and management by:

- gaining the full cooperation of all staff in acting collectively to make much-needed improvements to the school
- restoring confidence among staff by providing them with a positive working environment in which they feel safe, valued and supported
- building and sustaining further leadership capacity of school leaders and the trust so that proposed improvement plans are implemented fully, effectively and rapidly
- strengthening the school's governance to provide leaders with support and challenge and ensuring that all safety requirements are met.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders and the academy trust have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to improve the school. Many of the concerns raised during the previous inspection remain as important areas for improvement.
- Currently, some staff do not have full confidence in the trust to make improvements. Relations between staff and the trust have deteriorated. Not enough has been done to restore relations and resolve this issue.
- During the inspection, over one third of staff, including the headteacher and other leaders, were absent from school. This turbulence and the subsequent reliance on using temporary staff to cover for staff absence have adversely affected the behaviour and attitudes of pupils. Several staff who spoke with inspectors said that, because of this turbulence and the impact it is having on pupils' behaviour, they do not always feel safe in school.
- Leaders do not do enough to safeguard pupils. A recent review carried out by the local authority identified a wide range of shortfalls in the school's procedures. Recent staff absence has reduced leaders' ability to act on the recommendations made in the report.
- An established deputy headteacher manages the school and ensures that it operates on a day-to-day basis. The deputy headteacher knows the school well, and staff and pupils value his sustained support.
- In the absence of key senior leaders, other staff have been appointed to join the leadership team but, overall, there is not enough capacity within school to make much-needed improvements. Basic leadership responsibilities are not being carried out. For example, information gathered about pupils' attendance and behaviour is not analysed routinely to spot patterns and trends that inform actions to make improvements.
- A recent review in February this year of the school's work found that there are no clear procedures to enable teachers to assess how well pupils are progressing. The absence of key leaders and worsening behaviour have prevented leaders from taking action to resolve this weakness in assessment. Without these procedures, staff do not know how well pupils are doing. Leaders aim to improve this by sharing the good practice established in other schools within the trust but these plans have not been fully implemented at this stage.
- Additional funding to improve the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils is not used effectively. The pupil premium grant has not been spent this year. Consequently, this additional funding is having no impact on improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. There are no clear spending plans to show how this money will be spent. The use of the pupil premium last year has not been evaluated and shared on the school's website.
- Leaders are unaware of how much additional funding is allocated to promote physical education and school sport for primary-aged pupils.
- Effective leadership of the primary base ensures that pupils receive good-quality care in

a nurturing environment. This enables pupils to feel safe and re-engage in learning. Early reading is taught effectively to ensure that pupils gain the essential skills needed for learning in the wider curriculum.

- Older pupils pursue a suitable range of GCSE subjects in school. A few pupils study vocational awards in local off-site provision. However, the impact of this curriculum is largely dependent on pupils' attendance and behaviour. Observations by inspectors found that the poor behaviour and attitudes towards learning of those who do attend school limit their learning. Similarly, the impact of weekly lessons to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is lost due to poor behaviour.
- Some pupils have part-time timetables as part of their reintegration back into learning or because they are unwilling to attend school regularly. The quality of this provision is unclear because their personal timetables were not available during the inspection.
- Recent action taken by the trust to strengthen the school's strategic leadership is beginning to have an impact. Improvements are being led by a temporary acting headteacher appointed on an interim basis and other senior leaders from the trust. A rapid improvement plan is ready for implementation. Leaders are working with the local authority to begin to overhaul safeguarding arrangements and child protection records.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, senior leaders within the trust had not spent enough time in school to gain an accurate view of its effectiveness.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. The trust and local governing board have not checked that robust procedures are securely in place.
- A review of the school's work commissioned by the trust in February 2019 clearly identified its strengths and weaknesses and the improvements needed. Not enough has been done to tackle the recommendations made.
- A local governing body meets periodically to review the school's work. Minutes of its meetings show that this is mainly information sharing. There are few examples of thorough scrutiny and effective challenge provided for leaders.
- Governors do not ensure that all statutory health and safety duties are met. The school's fire safety log shows that a fire drill has not been carried out this year. Checks of the school's fire alarm, extinguishers and emergency lighting show that multiple faults have been identified but not rectified.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Scrutiny of the school's single central record and child protection records confirmed the widespread weaknesses and serious concerns raised during a recent review carried out by the local authority. There are very few robust, systematic procedures in place to ensure pupils' safety and welfare.
- Not enough attention is paid to protecting the school's most vulnerable pupils. For example, leaders are unclear about how many pupils are actually on the school roll or

their whereabouts. There are no systematic procedures in place to monitor the welfare of pupils who do not attend regularly or who are taught off-site.

- Records of the actions taken to protect pupils from harm are not well maintained. Child protection files are not stored centrally or collated well enough to illustrate what has been done to protect pupils. Recently, trust leaders and local authority officers have started to work together to unpick the information stored in these files and identify the provision made for each pupil to ensure that they are safe. This work is at an early stage of development.
- Attendance registers are not maintained accurately. Pupils have been marked as present when they are not on the school premises or are at off-site placements. Some pupils are marked as present without checking that they are in school.
- Safeguarding training for staff, including the 'Prevent' duty training, is up to date. Not all temporary staff are adequately trained to manage very challenging behaviour.
- Access to the school site and buildings is securely controlled to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Significant staff absence has led to a high number of temporary staff being deployed to cover gaps in teaching. These regular changes have led to turbulence, which has had a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. Older pupils who met with inspectors felt that this is unfair on them as they need their teachers to help them prepare for GCSE examinations this term. They said that teaching in English and science was helping them to progress but feel that, in other subjects, they are not learning or making any progress.
- Lessons are usually suitably planned and prepared but the impact of this is lost due to pupils' poor behaviour. For example, teachers share with pupils what they are expected to learn and use suitable examples to illustrate the teaching points but pupils either ignore the teachers or disrupt the learning of others.
- Teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough. Learning in lessons is frequently disrupted. Not all staff respond well enough to poor behaviour in any consistent way, for example when pupils shout out, swear, wander about and leave lessons.
- All staff have two-way radios to call for assistance or if pupils require time out of lessons. However, regular calls disturb the flow of teaching and learning. At least two staff are present in most lessons but teaching assistants act mainly in supervisory roles to oversee behaviour, rather than working with pupils to help them learn.
- When learning does capture pupils' interest, they settle down and begin to make some progress. However, tasks set are often too basic, such as copying and colouring or group discussion, and do not provide enough challenge. Pupils struggle to work by themselves for sustained periods of time and are too reliant on staff to do the work for them.
- In personal, social and health education lessons, teachers plan suitable topics that stimulate discussion and enable pupils to share their views. Issues relating to gangs

and substance misuse are treated sensitively but are not always explored fully to ensure that pupils' misconceptions are addressed.

- Teaching in primary classrooms is good. Teachers are well organised and know their pupils well. They provide pupils with a vibrant, nurturing environment in which to learn. In this caring and supportive environment, pupils develop positive attitudes, enjoy school and re-engage in learning. Staff know pupils' backgrounds well. They use their expertise to plan learning matched to pupils' individual needs.
- Relations between staff and pupils in the primary base are positive. Behaviour is much calmer in the primary setting. Pupils enjoy their learning and engage fully with staff. Expectations of pupils are high. The impact of this positive learning environment on pupils' progress is clearly evident in their books, which, for example, show secure methods for working out calculations and effective handwriting. Teachers ensure that misconceptions are picked up swiftly. The feedback that teachers give pupils about their work aids pupils' learning.
- Early reading is taught systematically, providing pupils with the phonetic skills needed to sound out and break down difficult words. Pupils enjoy reading. Their reading logs show that they read regularly to adults at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- A significant proportion of pupils regularly display very poor attitudes to learning and are often abusive towards staff.
- Attendance is persistently low. During the inspection, approximately a third of the pupils were absent. Absence rates are far too high. Attendance is not monitored well enough. Registers are not marked systematically.
- Leaders do not analyse attendance information closely enough. For example, information about attendance over time shows that a quarter of all pupils attend school for less than half the time it is open. Inspectors found little evidence to show what leaders are doing to improve this trend.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils and staff shared serious concerns with inspectors about the behaviour of pupils that, at times, means that the school is unsafe. Not all staff are trained in restraint and some do not know what to do.
- Too many pupils are excluded from school due to their poor behaviour. Parts of the school have been damaged by pupils who do not show respect for the buildings or the staff in them. Records of bullying and racist incidents are kept but the action taken by staff to follow up these matters when they arise is not recorded systematically. It is therefore unclear how unacceptable behaviour is addressed.
- Pupils gather in the dining hall at the start of the school day and during breaks and

lunchtimes. Staff and pupils mix well together and are usually sociable and friendly. Staff work hard to forge good relations with pupils and get to know them well.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Low attendance, persistent absence, poor behaviour in lessons, weak assessment procedures and high rates of staff absence all combine to prevent pupils from making adequate progress in key stages 3 and 4. Currently, in most lessons, very little learning is taking place.
- Last year, pupils in Year 11 were entered for examinations in a range of GCSE and vocational courses. Almost all pupils achieved at least one GCSE pass grade. Eighteen of the 30 pupils who sat GCSE examinations gained at least five pass grades.
- This year, pupils will sit examinations in English, mathematics, science and a small range of foundation subjects. Pupils who met with inspectors felt they were underprepared for examinations because of staff absence and the lack of continuity in their learning. Those studying art also expressed their disappointment that they have not been entered for the GCSE examination this year because they have not had enough help to complete their coursework.
- Pupils with SEND have not been monitored closely enough to ensure that they make sufficient progress. A senior leader has covered the duties of the special educational needs coordinator during a period of absence. However, this leader is also responsible for pupils in key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make good progress. They thrive in the nurturing environment provided for them. Staff encourage them to take pride in their work, and their writing, mathematics and topic books show a range of good-quality work.
- Outcomes achieved by pupils at the end of key stage 2 last year were generally low as pupils had missed long periods of their education before joining the school. Significantly, Year 6 pupils who sat national tests last year are now reintegrated back into mainstream schools. Current assessments of spelling and mathematics show that the pupils in key stage 2 are making the progress expected of them.

School details

Unique reference number	140970
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10105127

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same act.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy alternative provision
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Dix
Executive headteacher	Sarah Roscoe
Head of school	Deborah Garfield
Telephone number	020 3108 0345
Website	www.tbap.org.uk/aspire
Email address	head@tbap.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school joined the TBAP Multi-Academy Trust in January 2018. It aims to provide alternative provision for pupils permanently excluded from mainstream schools. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- All pupils have SEND. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not receive catch-up funding.

- A few pupils are taught off-site at home, in Harlow Library or at the Parmington Centre, Harlow.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 no formal designation inspection arrangements because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector has serious concerns about the school's safeguarding arrangements. On the first day of inspection, it converted to a full section 5 inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils at work in classes in all key stages. They scrutinised pupils' books in key stages 1 and 2. They observed pupils as they gathered at the start of the day and at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, including senior leaders of TBAP, two local authority personnel, school staff and a group of pupils. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with the chair of the multi-academy trust board and the trust's chief executive officer.
- Inspectors looked in detail at the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, minutes of governing body and trust board meetings, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and other information provided by school leaders.
- There is no judgement or separate section in this report for the provision for pupils in the early years foundation stage. Currently, there are no pupils in the early years foundation stage or in Year 1.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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