

Inspection of Bishopton PRU

Marsh House Avenue, Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS23 3HB

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Gillian Warby. This school is part of the Atomix Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Nichole Munro, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Timothy Blades.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils frequently experience disruption to their learning due to the poor behaviour of others. A significant minority of pupils are disrespectful to staff and other pupils. Staff do not deal with pupils' abusive language and poor behaviour effectively. Frequent changes in staffing have led to inconsistencies in the way the school manages pupils' behaviour. Despite this, staff build positive relationships with pupils. They get to know pupils well, which helps pupils to feel safe in school. Staff address incidents of bullying in a timely manner.

Pupils have the opportunity to make a fresh start to their education. The school now teaches a carefully sequenced curriculum. Pupils can gain qualifications in English and mathematics and study an increasing range of curriculum subjects. However, too many pupils have low attendance. Pupils do not benefit from teaching that is consistently effective. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils access a range of enrichment opportunities. These support the development of their life skills and prepare them for life beyond school. Pupils enjoy outdoor education activities and participate in a variety of experiences, including ice-skating and fishing. All pupils are represented on the student council. However, the curriculum to enrich pupils' personal development is not effective in promoting and developing their awareness of the importance of respect towards others.

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

Since the previous inspection, necessary improvements to the school have been implemented too slowly. Consequently, the quality of education has not improved and standards of behaviour have declined. There have been many recent changes to leadership and staffing, both within the school and the trust. This has slowed the rate of improvement. New leaders are taking purposeful action to address the areas of weakness in the school. Recently introduced policies and procedures, including for behaviour, are helping to provide clarity for staff. However, the difference the changes are making is not yet secure enough to have a demonstrable impact on supporting pupils to behave well and achieve their best.

Leaders have made well-intentioned changes to the way staff manage pupils' behaviour. These changes are taking too long to establish. Leaders have not acted with enough urgency to ensure that new staff have sufficient confidence to use the school's behaviour management strategies effectively. Some pupils demonstrate significant challenging behaviour, and some openly defy school rules. This has led to an increasing number of suspensions due to unacceptable behaviour.

The school has revised its processes to address persistent absence. This is showing signs of some success. The attendance of some pupils is beginning to improve. However, pupils' attendance overall remains too low. Many pupils are frequently absent. As a result, they miss essential aspects of their education.

Leaders have revised the curriculum. This is helping to raise expectations for what pupils can achieve personally and academically. The curriculum identifies the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn during their time at the school. Until recently, the delivery of the curriculum was inconsistent. Pupils have not been taught some important knowledge. In several subjects, teachers do not help pupils build on what they have learned before. Therefore, pupils have not achieved as well as they should. Previously, pupils have not been well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. New teachers and subject leaders are beginning to strengthen the quality of education, but their influence is at an early stage.

Staff create individual learning programmes for each pupil. When relevant, pupils' targets link to their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers adapt learning to help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. Pupils benefit from learning in small groups and have one-to-one support when needed. Nevertheless, the disruptive behaviour of some pupils prevents most pupils from learning well. This slows their progress through the curriculum.

The school has implemented a whole school approach to reading. Pupils develop their reading fluency and comprehension. Pupils who need extra help with reading, including those with SEND, receive extra personalised support. This includes through a phonics programme, when necessary.

Pupils' personal development is supported by a well-designed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Although the programme has been in place for some time, the school has only just started to teach it coherently to build pupils' knowledge effectively. Pupils learn about different relationships and online safety. Visiting speakers support pupils' understanding of risks, such as from knife crime. Pupils like cooking meals, playing chess

and participating in trips including to different places of worship. They benefit from a suitable programme to promote further education, employment and training options.

Staff appreciate and understand the changes being made to the school. Leaders support them well with their welfare and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum is too variable across the school. Pupils are not supported to build effectively on what they have learned before. As a result, pupils do not develop their knowledge and skills as well as they should. The school should ensure that curriculum leaders and teachers are supported to teach the curriculum well, so that pupils can achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Procedures to manage pupils' behaviour are not consistently effective. Some pupils are openly defiant. Staff do not manage unacceptable behaviour effectively. The poor behaviour of some pupils has a detrimental effect on the learning and daily experiences of other pupils. The school should ensure that all staff know and understand the expectations for pupils' behaviour and that they apply strategies to manage pupils' behaviour consistently and effectively.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. They miss essential learning and experiences, which has a negative impact on their education. The school should further intensify its efforts in working with parents and carers and pupils to ensure that pupils' attendance improves.
- While the trust is now taking important improvement action, this has not been enough to address embedded weaknesses. As a result, the weaknesses in standards of behaviour, the quality of education and the school's promotion of pupils' personal development are not being addressed sufficiently. The trust and the school must work together to implement the urgent improvements needed.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148601
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10346769
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Timothy Blades
CEO of the trust	Nichole Munro
Headteacher	Gillian Warby
Website	https://bishopton.tvc.ac.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a pupil referral unit for secondary-aged pupils.
- The number of pupils on the school's roll has increased significantly during the last year.
- A minority of pupils are dual registered. This means they are on the roll of two schools: the commissioning school and Bishopton PRU.
- The name of the trust has changed from Tees Valley Collaborative Trust to Atomix Educational Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
- There is a high proportion of pupils with SEND. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the interim deputy headteacher, the pastoral manager, the attendance leader, the designated leaders for safeguarding, the admissions officer, the clerk to senior leaders and some curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body, the chair of the trust, a governor, a representative from the local authority and the CEO of the Atomix Educational Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector spoke to leaders and pupils about the school's approach to teaching food technology.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone with leaders from a school who commission places at Bishopton PRU.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and staff. An inspector spoke with some parents and carers informally at the school gate and by telephone.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Sergeant

His Majesty's Inspector

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