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The Telford Langley School

Duce Drive, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire TF4 3JS

| **Inspection dates** | 29–30 January 2019 |

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and the leadership team have transformed this school. They have created a culture and ethos which are inclusive and driven towards high outcomes, strong pastoral care and high expectations.

- Pupils' outcomes are good because of improved behaviour, effective teaching and a redesigned, balanced curriculum. Leaders track pupils' performance rigorously so that they can put effective interventions in place. Consequently, pupils make strong progress.

- Disadvantaged pupils have historically underperformed. Although some differences between them and their peers remain, pupils currently at the school make stronger progress. This is due to targeted teaching, high-quality pastoral support and effective use of the pupil premium funding.

- Senior leaders evaluate rigorously the quality of teaching. They identify quickly any teaching that does not meet their high expectations and put focused and bespoke training in place. Staff speak highly about the support and training they receive.

- The school's pastoral care is a clear strength. Pupils feel safe at the school and are very complimentary about the effective support they receive when they need it. Pupils feel valued and say that teachers care about them and their well-being.

- Behaviour in lessons and at social times is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered. They speak with pride about their learning and the school. Pupils, parents, carers and staff agree that behaviour has improved markedly.

- In the past, most-able pupils have underachieved. Although improving, their progress is below that of others nationally with similar starting points. This is because pupils do not regularly benefit from tasks that stretch and challenge them sufficiently.

- The number of pupils who miss time from their education, either due to being persistently absent or to being excluded from school, is reducing but remains too high.

- On rare occasions, senior leaders' analysis of certain aspects lacks sharpness. For example, they do not analyse in sufficient detail the characteristics of pupils that transfer into the school through managed moves. Therefore, they are not able to report clearly to governors or the trust the needs of pupils who join the school.

- Outcomes in science have been weak. This was due to poor teaching and staff turbulence. The science department is fully staffed with expert teachers. Consequently, teaching is beginning to improve, albeit with some remaining inconsistencies.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in science, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - routinely stretch and challenge the thinking of most-able pupils so that they make the progress of which they are capable
  - plan work taking pupils' needs into consideration, particularly the disadvantaged, so that it is not too hard or too easy.
- Improve leadership and management further by analysing information about pupils in sufficient detail so that leaders can easily spot any trends and patterns in the characteristics of pupils that join the school roll mid-year.
- Reduce further the time pupils miss from their education, either by being persistently absent or by being excluded from school, by engaging more effectively with their parents.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- Leaders, governors and the Community Academies Trust (CAT MAT) are unwavering in their drive for excellence. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and work collaboratively to address any underperformance. For example, staffing turbulence has been an issue in the past. Leaders have addressed this with the help of the trust and, as a result, the school is now fully staffed with expert teachers in every learning area.

- The headteacher and the dedicated leadership team have brought about many improvements that have transformed the school. Behaviour is now good, teaching is strong and pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral care. Together with staff, they have raised expectations of pupils and created an inclusive school where 'every pupil is capable of greatness, they just might not know it yet'.

- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is strong. Senior leaders accurately evaluate and analyse teachers' performance. They act quickly to address any underperformance. For example, highly effective training is valued by teachers and has resulted in improved teaching across the school. Leaders have identified correctly that teaching in science has been less effective. They have appointed new staff, put support and bespoke training in place and monitor regularly the progress in that area. As a result, teaching in science is improving.

- Middle leaders form a dedicated group of professionals who take an active role in school improvement. They monitor effectively pupils' progress and the quality of teaching within their areas. Pastoral middle leaders ensure that pupils' academic and personal development is closely linked and they intervene when necessary. Middle leaders also work collaboratively across trust schools to moderate pupils' work, share best practice and support each other. Consequently, standards across the school have improved notably.

- Senior leaders use and evaluate effectively the impact of any additional funding they receive, including the pupil premium and funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Additional adults provide highly effective one-to-one support in lessons. Leaders plan carefully targeted and timely interventions and review these for their impact on pupils' outcomes. As a result, pupils with SEND make better progress and the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving.

- The previous curriculum included qualifications that were less valuable for pupils, such as the European Computer Driving Licence. These were either too easy or pupils had already covered the content in other subjects. Leaders recognised this and have redesigned the school's curriculum. The curriculum now offers a well-balanced range of academic and vocational courses that match pupils' interests and needs. Pupils in key stage 3 are supported very well when making decisions about their key stage 4 courses. As a result, pupils complete courses that prepare them well for their next steps.

- Newly qualified teachers regard highly the support that they receive. They feel fully supported as they develop their skills in teaching and managing pupils' behaviour. They value the quality of the training and the way in which leaders encourage them to be

reflective practitioners. Through this support, newly qualified teachers are already able to speak with passion and knowledge about a range of educational topics.

■ The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils regularly benefit from a range of activities, both within and outside normal lessons, in which they learn about current, topical and personal issues. Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils have many opportunities to learn about online dangers and how to keep themselves safe on social media, for example. As a result, pupils understand how to safeguard themselves online.

■ Leaders analyse a range of information about their pupils. They know them and their families well. A sizeable number of pupils leave, and new ones join the school during the academic year. Leaders keep records of pupils and their destinations. However, they do not analyse in sufficient detail the characteristics of these pupils. As a result, leaders have not been able to spot patterns or trends in pupils joining the school.

Governance of the school

■ The school is a member of the CAT MAT. Governance is provided by the school's local governing board. Governors know the school well and have a clear view of the strengths and those areas that need to improve further. They are dedicated to the school and possess many strengths. They bring a range of relevant experiences and expertise to their roles.

■ Members of the local governing board have high expectations of the school's performance and strive for a school where pupils receive an excellent education and are well prepared for their future lives.

■ Governors provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge to senior leaders. They use information gathered through visits to the school, as well as from reports provided by leaders and external improvement colleagues, to ask challenging questions in order to drive further improvements.

■ Governors discharge their statutory duties with diligence. They monitor the school's budget carefully. They check that safeguarding arrangements are robust and ensure that systems to manage teachers' performance focus on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

■ All staff work together to create a strong culture of safeguarding which permeates the school. It is underpinned by regular training and frequent updates on local, regional and national issues. All staff say that pupils' welfare and safety are their priorities.

■ The safeguarding and pastoral teams work highly effectively with relevant external agencies when required. Staff are persistent when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare and follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary. Leaders complete appropriate employment checks and keep accurate records.

■ All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand the

risks surrounding online safety. For example, leaders work tirelessly to ensure that pupils understand the risks surrounding social media and child sexual exploitation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment   Good

- Leadership of this aspect of the school is a strength. Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching across the curriculum is effective and ensures that leaders have an accurate view of where teaching is strong and where it needs to improve. When any underperformance is identified, leaders provide effective support and targeted training. As a result, teaching has improved and is good. However, there remains some variability in the quality of teaching in science. Leaders know this and have taken effective action to address this issue. Consequently, the quality of teaching in science is improving.

- Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and foster respectful relationships. They have strong subject knowledge and plan lessons that incorporate a range of stimulating resources which interest pupils and promote their curiosity. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and many of them told inspectors that teaching is good.

- Leaders regularly assess how well pupils are progressing and use this information to identify priorities for staff training and possible interventions. Teachers work closely with colleagues from other schools within the trust to share best practice and frequently moderate pupils' work together. This helps everyone to reach a common understanding about the expected standards of work. Staff are unanimous in their praise for the many training and professional development opportunities afforded to them.

- Teachers generally plan lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. However, most-able pupils do not routinely receive work that stretches and challenges them sufficiently. As a result, most-able pupils in the past have underperformed. Although the performance of this group is improving, most-able pupils continue to make less progress than they should. Leaders are aware of this and have taken action to address this issue. It is too soon to judge the impact of these actions.

- Leaders have introduced a robust and reliable system for collecting information about pupils' progress. Leaders and teachers can spot easily when a pupil falls behind and put timely and effective interventions in place to help pupils catch up and close any gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, current pupils are making stronger progress.

- Pupils enter the school with prior attainment that is significantly below average, and many have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders have focused on raising literacy and numeracy skills to help close those gaps. The school's reading programme is effective in helping pupils to catch up, and many improve their reading ability in a short space of time. Reading is fostered across the curriculum, and pupils are encouraged to read widely and often in almost all lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare   Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- The pastoral support provided by the school is a clear strength. Pupils, parents and staff are unanimous in their praise for the help, support and guidance pupils receive when they need it. Staff know their pupils and families very well. All pupils spoken to were highly complimentary about their staff and say that they know who to talk to if they have a concern.

- The school is proud of its inclusive ethos, where every pupil matters. A small minority of pupils raised bullying as a concern. In conversations with inspectors, the vast majority of pupils said it can happen but, when it does, they have every confidence that it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.

- Leaders monitor carefully the well-being of pupils who attend alternative provision. They track pupils' attendance and progress. Leaders choose the courses for these pupils, based on their interests and individual needs. This ensures that pupils access learning which prepares them well for their working life. Leaders keep in regular contact with, and visit the settings of, these providers to ensure that pupils are safe.

- Leaders plan the curriculum to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of current and topical issues, such as extremist views and online risks. Pupils benefit from regular safeguarding assemblies. All staff have a clear understanding that the school is located in an area where child sexual exploitation is evident. Work to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of the dangers around this issue and risks such as social media is highly effective. Leaders promote pupils' personal development well.

- Pupils have many opportunities to explore leadership positions, through the school's pupil leadership scheme. For example, pupils are proud of their status as peer mentors, reading ambassadors and anti-bullying ambassadors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils behave well in lessons, and learning time is rarely wasted. Behaviour during social times and in corridors at lesson change-over is calm and orderly. Pupils confirm that behaviour has improved significantly and that behaviour around school and in lessons is good. Parents who responded to Parent View and staff who completed the staff survey agreed that behaviour has improved hugely and is good.

- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff supervision is high but at the same time allows pupils the opportunity to self-regulate their behaviour. Pupils observed during lunchtime, for example, behaved in a respectful and orderly manner at all times. Inspectors saw no instances of poor behaviour.

- The behaviour of pupils who attend alternative provision is monitored closely. Leaders communicate effectively and regularly with the providers to ensure high standards of

discipline are maintained. Leaders closely liaise with parents of pupils at these settings and inform them about how well their child is doing.

- Fixed-term exclusions are above the national average. Inspectors saw clear evidence that this sanction is having a positive impact on managing pupils' behaviour, although they lose learning time as a result. Leaders have recognised this and have created spaces in school where pupils spend time. For example, 'The Link' and 'The Hub' are now used to ensure that pupils are at school and learning instead of being sent home. However, further work is needed to continue to reduce the times pupils are excluded from school for a fixed term.

- Although school leaders generally engage well with parents, the communication with parents whose children are persistently absent from school is less effective. As a result, the rate of persistent absences remains high. Leaders have introduced many effective initiatives to improve this situation. The impact of these actions on improved attendance figures is beginning to show, and current absence rates are reducing. For example, attendance at the time of the inspection matched last year's national average.

Outcomes for pupils   Good

- Since the last inspection, outcomes in many subjects have improved. In 2017, for example, pupils' progress was in line with national averages. This is due to improved behaviour, better teaching and robust checking of how well pupils are doing, so that leaders can intervene quickly.

- Current most-able pupils' work and assessment information show that they are making stronger progress. Leaders recognise that more work needs to be done to ensure that most-able pupils reach their full potential. Action has been taken to ensure that pupils receive more challenging work and are routinely stretched and challenged in their learning.

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving. This is because leaders use effectively the additional funding they receive to put targeted interventions in place to help pupils to catch up. As a result, current disadvantaged pupils make better progress, although some differences remain in a few subjects.

- Outcomes in science have been poor. This was due to staffing shortcomings and weak teaching. Leaders have acted to address this issue. Now the department is fully staffed with specialist teachers. Training for staff and support from other schools within the trust are improving the quality of teaching. Pupils now make better progress in science.

- A new leader in charge of pupils with SEND brought a renewed focus on targeted support and bespoke intervention which has resulted in pupils being able to access their learning more successfully. Additional adults in lessons provide effective support to pupils. They encourage pupils and support others to stay focused on their learning. As a result, the progress of current pupils with SEND is good.

- The school's curriculum has a clear focus on raising pupils' literacy skills. For example, pupils are encouraged to correct their own spelling mistakes in their work and read in a wide range of subjects. As a result, work over time shows fewer spelling mistakes. Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding successfully. The school's numeracy and

literacy intervention programmes ensure that targeted support is available for pupils who need to catch up. Consequently, pupils' reading ages and numeracy skills have improved, and gaps in their knowledge are closing quickly.

■ Senior leaders' work to prepare pupils for their next steps is effective. Pupils now benefit from visits to universities and plans have been made for a wide range of employers to visit the school and talk to pupils about apprenticeships. Leaders use the information they have about pupils to plan individually designed GCSE pathways. Consequently, the number of pupils who leave the school and go on to further education, employment or apprenticeships is rising.

School details

Unique reference number	139766
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10078670

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	711
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Simon Atkins
Headteacher	Steve Carter
Telephone number	01952386700
Website	http://www.telfordlangleyschool.co.uk
Email address	steven.carter@taw.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 December 2016

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school. The school is part of the Community Academies Trust.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils with support for SEND is above average. The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.
- A small number of pupils attend part-time, off-site alternative provision at AFC Telford and Crossbar Alternative Provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents. This included: the school's self-evaluation and action plans; school policies; and information about pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- Inspectors visited lessons in all key stages in a wide range of subjects, most jointly with senior leaders. They observed pupils' behaviour between lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime.

- Inspectors evaluated the work in pupils' books and folders across a range of year groups when visiting lessons.

- Inspectors held formal meetings with governors, senior and middle leaders, and teachers, including those newly qualified to teach. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust.

- The views of parents were considered through the 27 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and a number of the school's own parental questionnaires collected this academic year.

- Inspectors considered 27 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

- Inspectors had informal discussions with a large number of pupils in lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime and considered 40 responses to the online questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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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