

Inspection of Trafford Alternative Education Provision

Brentwood Avenue, Timperley, Altrincham WA14 1SR

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this warm and inclusive school. They benefit from a culture that celebrates diversity and difference. Pupils join the school having had difficulties in previous settings. Staff transform many pupils' lives by helping them to get back on track with their education.

Pupils enjoy warm and nurturing relationships with staff, who know them well. They help pupils to regulate their behaviour and to manage their emotions. Staff notice when pupils experience distress or discomfort, and they respond quickly and sensitively. This helps pupils to feel happy and know that they are in safe hands.

Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well and are suitably prepared for their next steps. These might be to move back into a mainstream secondary school or another destination that is right for them. This success is because staff understand pupils' learning needs and prioritise the rebuilding of their enthusiasm for learning.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of this school. The school threads opportunities for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) into each day. This, along with a sharp focus on pupils' emotional growth, enables pupils to develop their resilience and self-belief.

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

The school has created an ambitious and well-designed curriculum. In the main, staff have thought carefully about the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need to learn in order to succeed academically. However, there remain a small number of subjects that are less well developed than others. In these subjects, the knowledge, and order in which pupils should learn it, is not as clear as it could be. This means that a few teachers are not certain about what they need to teach and by when. In these subjects, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Nevertheless, most pupils achieve well. The school has created a curriculum that prepares pupils well to be successful in the future. At the end of key stage 4, pupils study for a suite of useful qualifications, including GCSEs, that prepare pupils well for their next stage of education.

Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. There are plenty of opportunities to revisit and recap important learning. Usually, teachers explain things clearly to pupils. However, sometimes, teaching is not as successful as it could be at delivering the curriculum. For example, some of the activities chosen do not always help pupils to learn the intended curriculum well because the activities are not interesting enough to engage them.

The school knows that many pupils arrive with gaps in their knowledge. In subjects where the school is clear about what pupils should learn, teachers collect information effectively

to shape learning that helps pupils to bridge these gaps. However, in a few subjects, this is not the case. Staff do not check carefully enough what pupils know and have learned. This means that staff sometimes miss gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Reading has a high profile. There is an appropriate understanding of where pupils are in their reading development. Adults provide effective support for pupils who find reading difficult. For example, these pupils benefit from revisiting early reading strategies and developing their comprehension skills further. Staff seek opportunities to foster a love of reading among pupils who are often reluctant.

The school is typically a calm place where pupils can learn. Through staff's kindness and patience, many pupils become motivated learners. Most pupils join the school after having long periods of non-attendance in previous settings. The school analyses and tracks absence thoroughly. It is successful at ensuring that many pupils re-engage with school. Staff do all they can to re-establish positive attendance habits.

Pupils' personal development is well matched to their needs. Pupil voice is important and has been key in developing a popular range of afternoon activities across the school. These include a wide range of trips and activities, such as dance, rock climbing and kick boxing. These opportunities for practical experiences help to build pupils' confidence and independence.

The school makes sure that pupils benefit from comprehensive careers advice and guidance. From Year 7 onwards, pupils are provided with opportunities to experience a wide range of professions and careers. This is supported by real-life experiences in areas such as construction, mechanics and food technology.

Governors share the school's ambitions. They demonstrate their commitment through the challenge that they offer. Staff value the support that they receive for their well-being and workload. For example, they appreciate the time that the school gives them to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not fully considered exactly what pupils should learn and in what order. This hinders some pupils from achieving as highly as they could. The school should finalise the curriculum content in these subjects to ensure that teachers know exactly what knowledge pupils must learn and when they should learn it.

- In a few subjects, the school has not ensured that the delivery of the curriculum is as secure as it could be. Where this is the case, some of the activities chosen do not always help pupils to learn the intended curriculum as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills that they need to implement these subject curriculums successfully.
- There are occasions when checks on pupils' learning are not used effectively. Where this happens, teachers are not clear about what pupils have learned and where there might be gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers have a clear understanding of exactly where pupils are in their learning and use this information to precisely determine pupils' next steps.

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	131134
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10337678
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	
Headteacher	Linda Thompson
Website	traffordalternativeeducation.com
Date of previous inspection	2 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Trafford Alternative Education Provision (TAEP) has changed considerably since the last inspection. It is now made up of two provisions. The first is a pupil referral unit. The second is Trafford Medical Education Service (TMES). The pupil referral unit provides short-term, full-time education for pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream school. TMES provides onsite education for pupils who are placed by the local authority for medical reasons. Across TAEP there are also a small number of assessment places. There has been a large increase in pupils on the school's roll since the previous inspection.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many pupils have autism. Some pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan.
- At the time of the inspection there were no pupils in key stages 1 or 2.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the school's leadership team, including the appointments of a new deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and other senior leaders.

- 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.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative provisions.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with curriculum leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors spoke with some pupils about their learning. They also looked at the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and other senior leaders and staff in school, including those responsible for safeguarding, careers and pastoral care.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff that focused on the well-being and safeguarding of pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the management committee, including the chair of the management committee. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including documents relating to school improvement.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and to Ofsted's pupil survey. Additionally, and as appropriate, inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Carole Austin

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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