

T Plus Centres (Taliesin Education)

Loveny House, Miller Business Park, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 4DA

Inspection dates

21–23 March 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- There is a lack of leadership and management across the school. As a result, the school does not have the direction needed and standards are low.
- Leaders do not have an accurate overview of the school's curriculum. Schemes of work are not up to date and fail to meet the needs of pupils. The curriculum limits pupils' development; some subjects, for example religious education, are not always taught.
- Leaders' assessments of pupils' progress are inaccurate. The newly introduced process for tracking pupils' progress is much needed but requires more precision.
- Pupils' rate of attendance is very low. Some pupils rarely attend school. They do not make progress and are vulnerable to risk.
- There is a lack of organisation across the school. Roles and responsibilities are blurred and accountability is underdeveloped.
- The actions of the local authority and the head of centre are propping up the school. They have prevented the school from deteriorating even further.
- Teaching does not meet the needs of pupils. Learning activities are often poorly planned and this inhibits pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions ensure that pupils are safe. For example, they maintain daily contact with social services. They acknowledge, however, that record-keeping must dramatically improve.
- The head of centre has acted to halt a steep decline in standards. He has formed a governing body and established a new level of middle management. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders and those responsible for governance urgently establish processes for systematically checking the school’s effectiveness against the independent school standards
 - the current over-reliance on the local authority decreases over time, through establishing an effective leadership and management model which brings stability and direction
 - roles and responsibilities are well defined and systems and processes are clear, followed and well understood
 - the logging and record-keeping of concerns about pupils’ well-being are streamlined and easily monitored by leaders
 - leaders and those responsible for governance hold school leaders stringently to account and develop the skills required to check the accuracy of the school’s self-evaluation
 - governors and middle leaders receive high-quality professional development in order to support them in their roles
 - the curriculum offer is rich and varied and develops pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills across all subjects, particularly reading, writing and mathematics
 - schemes of work are revised for each area of the curriculum and reflect the school’s ethos
 - the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is designed to meet the needs of pupils and reflects the risks that make them vulnerable
 - a thorough programme of monitoring is implemented, which checks the impact that teaching, learning and assessment has on increasing pupils’ progress
 - leaders develop systems to check the accuracy and robustness of the school’s assessment information
 - poor teaching is tackled swiftly and effectively
 - rates of attendance rise for all pupils.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers plan learning opportunities to meet the various needs of each pupil, with learning rather than activity at the heart of each lesson
 - teachers assess accurately what pupils know, understand and can do
 - staff receive high-quality training to enable them to develop their teaching skills
 - teachers’ expectations of what pupils can achieve are significantly raised and pupils’ dependency on adults decreases, particularly in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders' and managers' failure to monitor the independent school standards has resulted in many of the standards not being met. The head of centre, who is also the current interim headteacher, was not aware of these standards.
- Leadership and management have been ineffective in halting the decline in the school's performance. The local authority and the head of centre are currently propping up the school. There is a lack of leadership capacity across the school which has resulted in the downward trajectory of the school's effectiveness in recent years. The school has operated without strategic direction and standards have fallen.
- Leaders are not clear about the roles and responsibilities of staff across the school. For example, they are unsure who is taking responsibility for specific areas of school improvement. This results in confusion among staff and leads to systems and processes that are convoluted. Straightforward activities, such as policy renewal, have slipped through the net. Leadership is ineffective in raising standards.
- Leaders are not monitoring closely enough the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Although leaders have identified areas for improvement, these have not been acted on. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not improved and fails to meet the needs of pupils.
- The curriculum offer is narrow and does not develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills sufficiently. Pupils have limited opportunities to develop core skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. Social visits such as trips to the cinema, bowling and gym take precedent over ensuring that pupils develop the key skills required to succeed in the wider world.
- The school's PSHE curriculum is ineffective. The school serves pupils who have mixed experiences of schooling, with many excluded from previous settings. Some pupils are vulnerable to risks such as alcohol and substance abuse, criminality and anti-social behaviour, yet the school's PSHE curriculum does not address these issues. The outdoor education programme provides some PHSE but this is not enough to meet pupils' needs.
- The school's use of extra funding for specific groups of pupils is not monitored. There is no awareness of how disadvantaged pupils are supported through additional funding. The impact of extra funding for pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan is not evaluated. This results in pockets of varying practice, rather than a school-wide strategy and makes it difficult for leaders to plan improvements in outcomes for these groups of pupils.
- There is a lack of middle leadership across the school. The head of centre has introduced some new roles to the school but these are not yet effective. Middle leaders require training so they know what is expected of them in these roles. They have attempted to create action plans to make improvements but these are vague, lack rigour and are too focused on buying resources instead of improving the quality of teaching.
- The head of centre has attempted to improve assessment systems across the school. However, current assessments are inaccurate and do not enable leaders to effectively

track pupils' progress. As a result, the school's view of the progress made by pupils is unfounded.

- In recent months, the head of centre has provided much-needed leadership, particularly in improving safeguarding practices and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, he has had to rely on local authority support and the support of his deputy leader for safeguarding to make improvements in these areas.
- The head of centre has worked under extremely challenging circumstances to improve the school's performance. He has led the school, without knowledge of the independent school standards, with integrity. He acknowledges the need for more support, hence his actions to add layers of leadership which were lacking. Without his intervention, the school would be less effective than it is.
- Leaders provide counselling and supervision opportunities to support staff who work closely with pupils with wide and varied levels of need. Staff appreciate leaders' investment in their well-being.

Governance

- Until recently, governance of any kind has been absent in the organisation of school leadership. As a result, there has been a void of accountability and a lack of strategic direction in recent years. The head of centre recognises this and has successfully recruited two new governors to provide accountability and oversight of all facets of the school's performance.
- The newly formed governing body is, at this stage, ineffective. Although this added level of leadership is much needed, it is too soon to see its impact. Governors have undertaken the first strand of governor training. They are not yet equipped to carry out their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Despite poor organisation, it is clear that pupils are kept safe. The designated leader for safeguarding has been absent for some time. The deputy designated leader has shouldered responsibility for safeguarding during this absence. She is passionate about keeping pupils safe and can demonstrate how she maintains daily contact with social services in order to communicate arising concerns.
- The school's systems for record-keeping lack organisation. However, the culture of safeguarding is effective. Staff are well trained to ensure they pass on concerns about pupils. Care plans are detailed and kept up to date. Recruitment checks on new staff are thorough. Although logs of concerns are not recorded in a systematic way, leaders can demonstrate how they are passed on, and followed up with external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is poor and fails to meet the needs of pupils. Staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Inaccurate assessment of pupils' work means that staff are unable to design learning opportunities that challenge pupils or address misconceptions accurately.

- Teaching does not build on the knowledge and understanding that pupils already have. Pupils' workbooks show that activities are often too easy, and so do not challenge them to make good progress.
- Staff do not consistently promote pupils' independence, particularly in writing. Many pupils join the school working below expectations for their age. Teaching does not help pupils to develop their own writing because pupils rely too heavily on staff support. The quality of teaching varies widely across subjects and so pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent.
- In some subjects, such as humanities, staff have higher expectations of pupils. However, in many other subjects expectations are too low and sequences of learning are disjointed. Leaders recognise that staff require more training to help them plan learning effectively.
- Poor-quality schemes of work lead to poorly planned learning activities. Activities are poorly designed and do not take into account what pupils already know, understand and can do.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils do not have sufficient understanding of the particular risks they face because the PSHE curriculum is not tailored to their specific needs. As a result, even though pupils feel safe, they have limited knowledge of how to deal with a range of situations that they might encounter in the future.
- Pupils are ill-equipped to make healthy choices about their lifestyles. Many pupils do not understand how or why they should stay healthy physically.
- Staff support pupils' emotional well-being effectively. However, staff are less successful in helping pupils to understand how to be successful learners. This hinders pupils' progress because they do not develop self-confidence or resilience. For example, pupils have numerous trips out, for example bowling or to the cinema, but there is little evidence of how these activities will benefit them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Although a minority of pupils attend well, many pupils' rate of attendance is consistently low. Attendance for these pupils shows little sign of improvement. Some pupils are not attending at all, and so they are not making progress.
- The school serves pupils with a range of behavioural challenges. Staff manage behaviour calmly and pupils' behaviour is generally calm around school. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are often not followed through into action and so when poor behaviour happens it is not dealt with effectively. As a result, teachers' academic expectations of pupils are lowered further.

- School leaders are introducing a new approach to supporting pupils with significant emotional needs, with the aim of improving this aspect of their work.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate because pupils' progress from their starting points is consistently weak in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides education for 13 pupils. All pupils have an EHC plan and are funded by Cornwall or Bristol local authorities. Although leaders review these plans annually with a range of external agencies present, evaluations of pupils' academic progress are based on the school's inaccurate assessment information. The school's policy for supporting pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is out of date and the school's statutory special educational needs information report is not in place.
- Pupils' progress in reading is slow because teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to read. Teachers' weak assessment of pupils' reading skills leads to pupils' misconceptions being unchallenged. As a result, pupils do not improve their skills at a sufficient rate.
- Pupils' writing is poor and shows little improvement because staff often scribe for pupils, especially in literacy lessons, and this limits pupils' writing development.
- Pupils do not develop their mathematical understanding sufficiently across the school, and particularly in key stages 2 and 3. Teaching fails to build on their prior knowledge. Consequently, pupils make poor progress in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is not being supported effectively because this group receives no additional support in school. Leaders do not know what funding is in place to help these pupils and there is no expenditure plan or evaluation. Funding that has been ring-fenced to support these pupils is not being applied.
- Pupils receive timely careers advice. Through close work with a careers advisor, all upcoming school leavers have already secured a destination for September 2018. This work prepares pupils well for the next stage of their development.
- Pupils make strong progress in the outdoor education element of the school curriculum. Progress is specific and closely monitored. Statements of progress are precise and allow adults to make reasonable adjustments to activities in order to improve pupils' progress.

School details

Unique reference number	135405
DfE registration number	908/6096
Inspection number	10041377

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Proprietor	Taliesin Education Ltd
Head of Centre	Barry Coppins
Principal	Alice Morris
Telephone number	01579 342520
Website	www.tpluscentres.co.uk
Email address	alice.morris@tpluscentres.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 March 2015

Information about this school

- The T Plus Centres has spaces for 14 boys aged between seven and 16. There are currently 13 pupils on the school's roll.
- Most pupils arrive having been excluded from other settings. Due to their disjointed school experience, many are working below academic expectations for their age.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Two local authorities, Cornwall and Bristol, fund these.
- Some pupils are living in care; as a result, the school maintains regular contact with social services with regard to their attendance and any concerns that may arise.
- At the time of the inspection, the proprietor, who is also the principal, was unable to come into school. The head of centre is acting as principal in her absence.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed pupils' learning in both the school and at an alternative provider.
- Discussions took place with the head of centre. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from Cornwall local authority, a member of the newly formed governing body and the proprietor.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a number of documents including school improvement plans and leaders' monitoring records of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The lead inspector scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and met with the deputy designated safeguarding leader.
- The lead inspector considered schemes of work, written risk assessments and annual reviews of EHC plans.
- The lead inspector, together with the head of centre, looked at pupils' work in books to establish the current quality of pupils' work and their progress over time.
- The lead inspector considered one response to the online survey, Parent View, and also considered 16 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which–
 - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school’s aim and ethos.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils’ work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school’s own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor– ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
 - 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility; and
- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request.
 - 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is
 - 32(2)(c) where there is a governing body, the name and address for correspondence of its Chair.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language
 - 32(3)(e) particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations
 - 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which–
 - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is–
 - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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