

# Talbot House School, Newcastle upon Tyne

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133779
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle Upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	381564
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Declan McCarthy

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	31
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Terry Bevan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy James
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Hexham Road Walbottle Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE15 8HW
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Declan McCarthy

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Three lessons taught by three teachers were observed jointly with the head of education. Meetings were held with staff and two members of the governing body. Informal discussions took place with pupils and telephone discussions were held with parents, carers and local partnership organisations. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including tracking data to record pupils' progress, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, the school's self-evaluation documentation, samples of pupils' work and individual case studies. Questionnaires returned from pupils, staff and 15 parents and carers were scrutinised.

## Information about the school

Talbot House serves pupils from local authorities in the North East of England. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Approximately a half of pupils have additional disabilities and special educational needs due to complex learning and medical needs. Most pupils arrive at school with histories of poor attendance, disruption to their education and are disengaged from learning. All pupils are from White British backgrounds and most are boys. An above average proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. At the time of the inspection, there were no students in the sixth form and pupils in Year 11 had left. The school provides a breakfast club managed by the governing body.

There have been a number of changes since the last inspection. The school received an interim inspection monitoring visit in February 2011. The age range of pupils has changed from 11 to 16 years to 7 to 18 years. Residential care for 52 weeks per year is now provided in a linked children's home, which was registered in February 2012. This was inspected separately by a social care inspector during the inspection of the school. The school has extended its provision to include a vocational skills centre for Talbot House pupils, which is used by local schools and agencies, a new Key Stage 2 teaching base and a new therapy suite. The school has gained the Healthy School status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school which is rapidly improving. It is not yet outstanding because teaching promotes good rather than outstanding progress.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils quickly re-engage with learning and make good and sometimes outstanding progress academically, to attain a wide range of GCSE examinations by the end of Year 11. Pupils also succeed in a range of vocational courses, preparing them well for transition to colleges of further education or employment.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make good use of resources in planning a range of interesting activities to motivate pupils' learning. Strong team work between teachers and support staff ensures that learning tasks for pupils with additional special educational needs are carefully matched to their levels of ability. Assessment is used well to set behavioural targets. However, there are missed opportunities to set challenging academic targets at annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs, to incorporate these as smaller steps in individual education plans and use them in planning.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils rapidly improve their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning during their time in school. Parents and carers recognise this and acknowledge that their children stay safe in school.
- Leadership and management are good. Strong team work between all leaders with a determination to drive improvements forward has led to good improvement in all aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate and used well in developing provision to raise standards. Good leadership of teaching and effective management of performance has improved teaching from satisfactory to good. It has also led to the development of improved assessment systems to track pupils' progress and a good curriculum with increased opportunities for enrichment and academic and vocational accreditation. However, there are missed opportunities to monitor the impact of academic targets on extending pupils' learning and to determine how teaching promotes resilience, confidence and independence.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - setting challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics and for GCSE subjects at annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs
  - breaking these targets down into smaller achievable steps for inclusion in termly individual education plans
  - using these targets consistently to plan learning activities which extend pupils' thinking
  - focusing the monitoring of teaching on the consistency of target setting to extend pupils' learning and how effectively teaching promotes high levels of resilience, confidence and independence.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment and particularly low levels of literacy skills as a result of their previous experiences of educational failure and histories of poor attendance. They make good progress over time so that by the end of Year 11, their attainment is broadly in line with national expectations and well above that of similar pupils in other schools. All pupils achieve between three and eight GCSE grades, including English and mathematics and most achieve at least six GCSEs plus a range of vocational certificates including painting and decorating, construction, carpentry, motor vehicle maintenance and hair and beauty. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives and all leave school to enter further education or employment. Since the last inspection, there has been a steady rise in pupils' attainment with increased opportunities for accreditation. This together with good teaching has ensured pupils achievement has moved from satisfactory to good with a few individual pupils making outstanding progress.

At all key stages, pupils make good progress in lessons. In a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, pupils were focused on identifying the use of an index, contents page and glossary in texts. In a Key Stage 3 science lesson, pupils investigated reflex actions, demonstrating a good understanding of reaction time. In a Year 10 GCSE English lesson, pupils demonstrated good literacy and social interaction skills in sharing their views of which candidate to select, from a choice of three for a teaching post in an inner city school. The attainment in reading of the few pupils in the new Key Stage 2 provision is below average. Pupils in all key stages are making good progress in re-engaging with reading; they read with confidence and made good use of their knowledge of letter sounds to read unfamiliar words. Pupils of higher ability made good use of punctuation to read with expression.

There are no significant differences between the achievements of different groups. Disabled pupils and those with additional special educational needs make equally good progress as others because teaching assistants provide good support for their learning. They help pupils to deepen their understanding of technical words by modelling examples and explaining them carefully and breaking learning tasks, rather than targets, down into smaller achievable steps.

Parents and carers believe that their children make good academic progress as a result of good teaching and the high quality of care and support for their children in school. This is a view endorsed by inspection findings.

## **Quality of teaching**

Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and lessons proceed at a lively pace. This together with enthusiastic teaching, good subject knowledge and effective use of resources promotes pupils' good learning and progress. Teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' prior attainment and use this knowledge effectively to ensure learning tasks are matched precisely to pupils' different learning needs. As a result, the teaching for disabled pupils and those with additional special educational needs is good and enables these pupils to make equally good progress relative to their starting points as others.

Although learning tasks usually challenge pupils' thinking, there are missed opportunities to set challenging academic targets at the annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs, in reading, writing, mathematics and for GCSE examinations, which could then be broken into smaller achievable steps and used by teachers in their planning to set more challenging tasks to improve the quality of learning from good to outstanding.

The teaching of reading is good. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher and support assistant took turns to read a book alongside each pupil, encouraging each to sound out unfamiliar words and use punctuation to read with expression. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and technology are promoted well in different subjects. In a Year 9 science lesson, the interactive whiteboard was used well to show different types of reflex actions. Pupils developed their literacy skills by discussing a clear hypothesis for their investigation. Numeracy skills were developed well as pupils were encouraged to record reflex reaction times in standard units of measurement. Pupils' work shows good teaching of basic skills across different subjects, for example, in the use of word processing to provide well-written accounts of the D-Day landings in the Second World War where literacy and technology skills were promoted well and in construction where ratios of sand and cement and the number of bricks are calculated to build a wall.

Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development well, by raising self-esteem through good behaviour management and the positive use of praise and encouragement. This ensures pupils are well motivated and re-engage with learning quickly. Teachers provide well-conceived opportunities for pupils to develop good social interaction skills through collaborative learning and develop self-reliance by encouraging independent learning. The social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme enables pupils to distinguish right from wrong through, for example, consideration of the abuse of social networking sights to bully others. Teachers provide good opportunities to promote cultural development, through a wide range of subjects such as art, music, drama, religious education, personal, social and health education and in physical education. This inspection confirms the views of parents, carers and pupils that teaching is good.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Parents and carers acknowledge this and believe their children are making at least good progress in their behaviour and attendance. Pupils handle equipment safely, move safely around the school and use the internet safely. Staff are rigorous in implementing the smoking cessation policy. They provide support and health

counselling to those addicted to nicotine and through the curriculum and behaviour targets actively discourage smoking. As a result, there is a significant reduction in smoking over time. Pupils rapidly improve their attendance as a result of the effective strategies for promoting good attendance and the implementation of pupils' choices within the curriculum so that they want to be in school. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning which enables them to make good progress. The popular breakfast club also provides pupils with a positive start to the day and promotes good attendance and punctuality.

Pupils respond well to the management of their behaviour. As a result, their behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically good with a marked reduction in disruption over time and no exclusions. Bullying is dealt with effectively and no incidents were seen or recorded during the inspection. Pupils, parents and carers also acknowledge this. Pupils are developing an increasing awareness of different forms of bullying and how to prevent this through the SEAL programme.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and head of education have developed a strong commitment and drive for improvement among all staff in the school. Leaders make good use of their accurate self-evaluation and performance management, based on regular monitoring of teaching and learning, to set clear whole-school and individual staff targets for raising achievement. Good opportunities for staff training have led to improvements in the quality of teaching, resulting in steadily rising attainment over recent years. Pupils' achievement and their behaviour and safety have moved from satisfactory to good, as a result of the much improved quality of teaching and also of leadership of teaching. However, there are missed opportunities to monitor the impact of target setting on improving the quality of pupils' learning further and to determine how teaching promotes resilience, confidence and independence in learning.

The governing body, including the trustees, oversee the work of the school well through regular monitoring visits. These include visits to classrooms to observe teaching and learning, the rigorous monitoring of safeguarding by, for example, scrutiny of incident books, observations of pupils around the school and health and safety checks of all teaching areas. Vetting procedures are rigorous and staff provide high levels of supervision of pupils around the school, meaning that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

Leaders have developed a good curriculum with a balance between academic and vocational learning and a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and technology skills. The recent development of the skills centre, with increased opportunities for vocational courses, has benefited pupils in the school and pupils from other schools and units within the community. Stakeholders who use this facility spoke highly of the impact of this on pupils' learning and well-being. Strong partnership with careers advisers and a well-conceived work related learning programme ensure a smooth transition from school. Equality of opportunity is promoted well as gaps in attainment have narrowed and leaders have ensured the curriculum is matched well to individual needs. The school has made good improvement in all aspects of its work since the last inspection and demonstrates a good capacity to further improve.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Talbot House School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8HW**

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently and for sharing your views with me about your school. I was impressed with your good behaviour in lessons and around school and the way the oldest pupils looked after younger ones. I particularly appreciated the respect and courtesy you showed towards me. You and your parents and carers told me Talbot House is a good school and I agree. Here are more good things I found out about your school.

- You achieve well and make good progress in your lessons.
- Teaching is good and staff plan interesting activities with good support from teaching assistants to make learning enjoyable for you.
- You behave well in lessons and around the school, you know how to stay safe; your behaviour and attendance has improved significantly since your admission to the school.
- Your school is well led and managed and everyone is committed to developing your school further.

I have asked the school to move the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that targets to extend your learning are set at your annual reviews. I want teachers to break these down each term into smaller steps and to use them to plan activities to challenge your thinking further. I have also asked your school leaders to check how well this is being done.

Thank you again for sharing your views with me.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy  
Lead Inspector

