

The Michael Tippett School

Heron Road, Lambeth, London, SE24 0HZ

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students, including those in the sixth form, achieve well. This is especially so with their communication skills. Signing and symbols are used well to assist those students with no or limited verbal skills. Those with the potential to read are given good support to do so.
- Teaching is effective because teachers use their specialist skills very effectively to meet the complex needs of each student.
- Teachers, with the good support of assistants, successfully engage students in a wide range of learning activities. High-quality lesson planning ensures that work matches the individual needs of each student very well.
- Robust behaviour management systems ensure that students' behaviour and safety are monitored extremely carefully. Students develop increased independence in the management of their lives.
- Effective leadership and management have not only tackled the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection but have considerably improved teaching and students' achievement. The governing body provides invaluable support and encouragement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The sixth form is good but the activities and courses offered mean that achievement and teaching are not quite as effective as elsewhere in the school. It does not always provide a full range of learning opportunities for these students.
- Insufficient attention has been given to how students' physical development could be advanced further. Staff and students do not always change for physical education lessons and playground equipment is minimal.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in eight lessons taught by eight teachers and undertook two learning walks where they sampled teaching and learning in a number of classes.
- They held meetings with a group of pupils and members of staff. Meetings were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work, teachers' lesson plans and tracking data showing pupils' progress.
- School policies were sampled and the minutes of recent governing body meetings were reviewed.
- The inspectors took account of responses from parents in a recent school survey of their views, but there were insufficient parental comments to activate the online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Charles Hackett, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Michael Tippett School caters for students with a range of disabilities and special educational needs. There are students with profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties, including about 40 per cent who are also on the autistic spectrum. A third of students are recognised as having challenging behaviour.
- An above average number of students are known to be eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium.
- A much higher than average number of students come from minority ethnic groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Within the next financial year, increase the emphasis placed on supporting students' physical development by:
 - ensuring that staff and students, where possible, dress appropriately for all physical education activities
 - increasing the range of physical equipment available in the playground, including providing more facilities that students using wheelchairs can access.
- Over the current academic year improve the leadership and curriculum of the sixth form through:
 - extending the courses and activities offered to ensure that they give students increased opportunities to develop their skills for independent living
 - increasing the opportunities students have to take different forms of external accreditation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- Students make good progress in lessons because of the excellent focus teachers put on linking the activities to the known ability levels of each student. Often students build up their skills in small steps in a sequence of lessons. This was seen in English where students with severe learning difficulties were beginning to understand the basis of a story.
- Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress in becoming more aware of the environment around them, showing how they can respond to a range of different sounds, smells and pictures.
- Students on the autistic spectrum are making good progress in interacting with each other. This was seen in lessons and at break times when some students chose either to pass or kick a ball to each other.
- The school tracks students' progress very carefully. The data collated from this show, that all students, including those in receipt of the pupil premium and from minority ethnic groups, consistently make good progress. Where any start to falter, appropriate interventions are put in place. These have proved to be effective because last year almost all students made expected progress from their various starting points.
- Progress is good in the sixth form, where students benefit from the consistently high quality of teaching in the school. The school, though, recognises that more could be done to provide a wider range of activities to develop students' independence, as well as increasing opportunities to achieve external accreditation.
- Not all students have the capacity to begin to read. However, many show an ability to recognise sounds and words through the consistent use of symbols throughout the school. Those students with the capacity to read are making good progress in reading short sentences and other students are developing their enjoyment of looking at books.
- Students enjoy physical activities in lessons and at breaktimes. However, their progress is reduced a little by the limited equipment, especially for those in wheelchairs, available on the playground.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- Throughout the school the quality of teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. All teachers have high expectations for all groups of students to achieve. In the sixth form, teaching does not always focus sufficiently on preparing students for independent living.
- The teaching of physical education is less effective because staff, and students who are capable, do not dress appropriately. These are key reasons teaching is not outstanding overall.
- A key factor in the success of teaching is the excellent planning of lessons. This ensures that activities are based around the individual needs of each student. The use of assessment strategies during lessons means that teachers are regularly checking on the progress of students.
- Teachers use specialist skills and strategies very effectively to engage students in learning activities. For example, for those students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, an excellent sensory approach is taken to help them interact with the environment around them.
- Students with very complex needs often require one-to-one teaching that is carefully matched to their previously recorded responses. In an example observed, the teacher, in a very calm and assured manner, used simple clear language and symbols to successfully guide a student to match labels to boxes containing different objects.
- In all lessons, teachers and assistants put a very strong focus on communication. All students have communication passports and signing is used regularly and effectively to communicate with many students. Students themselves often make use of signing to make

known their needs.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together. They benefit from a detailed knowledge of each student. Many examples were observed during the inspection of teaching assistants working very effectively with individuals or small groups of students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The Michael Tippett School is a very safe environment. Behaviour and safety are exemplary because of the highly effective work and skills of its dedicated staff team.
- Staff and pupils all have positive views about behaviour and safety in the school. Parents in a recent school survey reported that they had no concerns about behaviour and safety. There is no evidence of bullying and no reported incidents.
- Students themselves have very positive attitudes to being in the school and taking part in learning in lessons. They clearly enjoy positive relationships with staff and relate extremely well to each other.
- Students show an excellent understanding of the differing needs of others. This ensures that they are able to play inside and outside in a safe and secure environment. Those students diagnosed with challenging behaviour increasingly become more settled and fully engaged in activities.
- Students enjoy taking on responsibilities which fully support their social and moral development. A few students are given the role of prefect. Those spoken to stress that this means they are a helper for others. One student showed she understood this by escorting the inspector back to the headteacher's office.
- Staff use their considerable expertise to manage the complex needs of students, including those with the potential for challenging behaviour, extremely well. The leadership of this aspect of the school's work is exemplary.
- Behaviour management systems have been thought out extremely carefully. Risk assessments are made through monitoring each student very carefully, and individual behaviour and positive handling plans, when needed, are agreed with parents.
- The attendance of students is very good and there are excellent arrangements to escort them in and out of school.

The leadership and management are good

- Under its aspirational headteacher, the school has increased its effectiveness considerably since its previous inspection. Its aim is to be outstanding and the fact that it is almost there is a clear indication that leadership and management have had a very positive impact. Much has been done to develop the quality of teaching and learning. A rigorous performance management system has identified where staff need additional support. Weekly best practice workshops have been introduced and this has led to the consistent high standards across the school. The whole school approach to signing is an example of the effectiveness of this process.
- Leadership within the school is distributed extremely effectively. This means that all staff have opportunities to contribute on working parties to different aspects of the school's work.
- Data collected on students' achievements is used well to put in interventions where required and contribute to the thorough ongoing self-evaluation processes. These are used well to establish clear priorities for further development.
- The school gives high priority to safeguarding. Policies are appropriately reviewed regularly and the recruitment of staff is given very careful consideration.
- The curriculum in the main school is well organised to address the varying needs of individuals and groups of students within the school and is well supported by enrichment activities, such as the opportunity students have to care for horses at a local stable. The curriculum in the sixth form, although having a good focus on developing students' literacy

and numeracy, has limited opportunities for extending students' independence skills.

- There is an excellent focus on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, many opportunities exist for students to engage in aspects of the creative arts. These include involvement in the London schools' Shakespeare festival and whole school art projects that have created murals and sculptures.
- Financial management is given very careful attention. Additional money provided through the pupil premium is being used well to purchase mobile computer tablets to support students' communication and learning needs.
- The local authority has provided the school with good support in monitoring and moderating their views on teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - contributes positively to the aspirational vision the school has for its work
 - challenges and holds the school to account very effectively
 - ensures that finance is managed well and their all statutory duties are carried out well.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133442
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	402576

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Bembridge
Headteacher	Jan Stogdon
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2012
Telephone number	020 73265898
Fax number	020 73265899
Email address	contact@tmts.lambeth.sch.uk

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