

Inspection of an outstanding school: Tuke School

Daniel Gardens, Peckham, London SE15 6ER

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 July 2021

Outcome

Tuke School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Tuke School is a very special place. Pupils reach personalised and ambitious goals because of the school's support. Every part of school life is designed around the school's high expectations to meet the needs of individual pupils. For example, every pupil is able to communicate because staff use carefully selected signs, symbols and objects of reference.

Pupils study a broad and rich curriculum. This goes beyond areas of learning such as communication and numeracy to include music, cooking and dance. Pupils are happy and safe. They are cared for by an expert multidisciplinary team. Every member of this team works together so that pupils can be as independent as possible. Pupils' independence is promoted throughout the school.

A distinctive part of the school is the purpose-built building that leaders helped to design. It has wide, bright corridors that help pupils to move easily and safely around the building. Specialist resources include a hydrotherapy pool, as well as art and food rooms. All classrooms connect to an outside area. This gives pupils the space they need so that classrooms are calm and purposeful. Leaders' and staff's expertise, together with consistent routines, mean that pupils' behaviour is exceptionally well supported.

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

Leaders and staff have the very highest expectations for all their pupils. They work hard to address pupils' needs through the personalisation of a broad, innovative and coherently planned curriculum.

The curriculum is planned so that pupils build upon what they learned before. For example, in the visual arts, pupils learn about different colours before learning about the

abstract concept of shadows. Leaders make sure that there is enough time in the curriculum for pupils to learn what is intended. Outside of lessons, there are many opportunities for pupils' broader development. For example, every lunchtime, pupils sit together with staff and friends to communicate and practise choice making. There is also a range of planned cultural and social activities throughout the year. For example, some pupils explore dance during their lunchtime activity.

Each pupil is set clear and achievable targets called 'learning intentions'. These are short-term targets that enable pupils to reach the long-term goals set out in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Teachers use their knowledge of the curriculum and pupils' learning intentions to plan interesting lessons that are appropriate for every pupil in the class. Teachers, support staff and senior leaders revise and moderate these targets rigorously to ensure they are always appropriately challenging. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for their next step in education, employment or training.

Pupils use many different ways to communicate in and outside of lessons. Leaders have ensured that all staff have the necessary skills to communicate with pupils effectively. This is because there is appropriate training in place. For example, teachers receive regular and bespoke training from the school's speech and language therapist.

A strength of this school is the close working relationship between teachers, support staff and pupils. Staff know their pupils extremely well and provide consistent and individualised approaches to support exemplary behaviour. Incidences of challenging behaviour are rare. Classrooms are purposeful and calm, which consistently encourages pupils' learning.

Leaders are ambitious for what students will do when they leave the school. The post-16 curriculum has been designed to help students go on to lead successful and independent lives. For example, students learn what they need to know to be able to prepare, cook and eat their own lunch. Alongside the post-16 curriculum, students work towards qualifications. This ensures that their progress is recognised and celebrated. Students also have the opportunity to apply what they have learned through work experience.

Governors and leaders recognise and value the important role played by every member of staff. Leaders are proactive in addressing the challenges of recruiting suitably qualified teachers. There is also a leadership programme in place to develop staff expertise further. Leaders appreciate that the school's staff work hard. They have taken steps to manage workload and promote well-being. Staff feel well supported and trusted. They said that they are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. Teachers and support staff are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about the welfare of pupils. They recognise that, for many pupils, communicating their concerns is difficult. Staff are

therefore alert to any changes in behaviour and there is a sharp focus on making sure that pupils can express how they feel.

Teachers feel confident that they can always speak to leaders if they have any concerns.

Leaders work closely with the relevant agencies to keep pupils safe.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in October 2011.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

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.

School details

Unique reference number	100880
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10192559
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elinor Perry Smith
Headteacher	Heidi Tully
Website	www.tukeschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	7 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a secondary special school for pupils with severe and complex needs.
- Every pupil has an EHC plan.
- A range of therapists work in the school.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders from the school. They met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. A meeting was also held with a senior adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors met pupils to understand their views on the school.

- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: communication and language, personal, social, health and economic education and visual arts. As part of the deep dives, inspectors met with leaders to discuss curriculum plans, visited lessons with senior leaders, met with teachers and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the well-being and behaviour of pupils during lesson visits and around the school. They visited the dining hall and lunchtime activities.
- Inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding through discussions with leaders, teachers and support staff. They looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their workload and well-being. They considered the 30 staff responses to the Ofsted survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school improvement plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

Inspection team

Jasper Green, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Wright

Her Majesty's Inspector

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