

Inspection of Tram House School

520 Garratt Lane, London SW17 0NY

Inspection dates: 17 to 19 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Outstanding |
| Does the school meet the independent school standards? | Yes |

What is it like to attend this school?

'The school is a lifeline for me and my child,' commented one parent. Other parents and carers share similar views. Pupils often come to this school after a long time out of education or if a previous placement has broken down. At Tram House, staff never give up. They keep going and are determined to find a way to help every pupil.

Leaders are right to be proud of their recent award for well-being, reflecting their strong emphasis on mental health. Pupils' personal development blossoms during their time at the school. They learn to be independent, communicate, work with each other and go out into the local community. Students in the sixth form are being extremely well prepared for adulthood.

All staff have high expectations. This includes for pupils' behaviour and academic achievements. Staff follow the same routines so that when learning starts, all pupils are ready. Staff manage behaviour very well. When pupils are having an off moment, no one raises their voice, everyone remains calm.

Pupils learn how to be kind to each another and bullying is never accepted. As a result, any incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils feel happy and safe.

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

When pupils start at the school, leaders get to know them exceptionally well. A range of adults, including therapy staff, build up an in-depth picture of each pupil. Staff use this information, alongside each pupil's education, health and care plan (EHC plan), to create a curriculum that is right for each individual. Adults then work together to break down learning into sensible, smaller steps.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects. All subjects are delivered through a balance of one-to-one and group sessions. The one-to-one teaching helps pupils prepare to work successfully with their peers in their group sessions. As a result, when pupils join in group work, they behave well and can focus on learning. The one-to-one identified adult also gives pupils carefully managed support for other areas of learning, including personal hygiene and independent living.

Leaders set ambitious targets for pupils, and staff check on progress regularly. Pupils are given tasks to do in the classroom and in the local community so that they apply their knowledge and skills in different ways. Staff set more ambitious challenges for pupils when they know they are ready.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to read aloud in their one to ones and in groups. A small group of pupils are receiving phonics lessons as part of their individual education plans. Sometimes, the books that pupils read contain sounds they do not know. This is not helpful in supporting pupils to embed sounds into their long-term

memory and in becoming better readers. Some staff lack full expertise in delivering the school's phonics programme.

Leaders have planned a clear personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme that includes relationships and sex education. Pupils learn lots about topics such as puberty, consent and healthy and unhealthy relationships. They also learn what makes people and families different from one another. Leaders look for every way to adapt materials and vocabulary so that their pupils can learn in a way that is right for them.

Classrooms are bright and airy. Staff are well prepared for their sessions and have the resources that they need to deliver their subjects. They are well trained in autism spectrum disorder (ASD). They know how to make learning accessible, for example asking short, clear questions and using lots of visual aids.

Teachers and other adults know pupils really well. They work together to plan what pupils need to know, remember and practise. Sometimes, in group sessions, teachers do not use the supporting adults as well as they could. When this happens, the precise checking and/or extending of pupils' understanding is not sharp enough.

The sixth form is a hive of activity. Staff have a clear focus on what each pupil must achieve during their three years in the sixth form. Pupils gain a range of qualifications that help prepare them for life after school. The curriculum gives the right focus to careers, employability and independent living. One parent commented that it 'was a miracle' to see their child doing work experience. Another said their child has 'the skills they need for the best and most independent quality of life'.

Leaders ensure that careers and work experience provide meaningful opportunities for all pupils. Leaders work with employers to help them understand ASD. They share with them what pupils can and cannot do. As a result, placements give pupils positive and purposeful experiences.

Pupils come on leaps and bounds during their time at the school. The school goes above and beyond to help pupils unlock the barriers ASD may cause them. That said, they also challenge pupils to come out of their comfort zones. Leaders ensure pupils go swimming weekly. Pupils go skiing and have experiences such as 'politics week' and 'animal awareness'. These are just a few examples of what is on offer. All the activities and experiences significantly support pupils in developing an understanding of the world around them.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by leaders. They spoke positively about the training they receive in ASD and behaviour management to help them meet the challenges of their roles.

The proprietor body, including trustees and governors, have strong knowledge and skills. They understand ASD and share high expectations. The school meets the requirements of the independent school standards (the standards). However, a few aspects of record-keeping and compliance were remedied during the inspection.

Leaders recognise the need for training for the local governing body on the standards. Currently, their ability to hold leaders to account for compliance with the standards is limited.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone puts keeping pupils safe at the heart of their work. All staff know pupils incredibly well. Staff use this knowledge and their training to notice when a pupil may be worried about something, especially if they may be unable to communicate for themselves.

Staff use a range of effective ways to help pupils understand how to stay safe and manage risks that they may face, for example when taking part in community activities. Leaders work well with different agencies to keep pupils safe. They are quick to pick up any concerns and to seek advice when needed. Parents feel that their children are safe and well looked after.

The school's safeguarding policy is written in line with the latest statutory guidance and is available on its website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have rightly put in place a systematic synthetic phonics scheme for a small group of pupils where this is highlighted in their individual education plans. However, not all aspects of the programme are being implemented as well as they should be. Some books that pupils read do not match the sounds they are learning. Leaders have planned further training, but currently, some staff do not have the depth of expertise needed. Leaders need to refine their phonics curriculum, ensuring all staff have sufficient expertise and that books and/or any adapted materials that pupils read always match the sounds they are learning.
- Occasionally, teachers do not use supporting adults as well as they could in group sessions. As a result, sometimes, pupils' knowledge and skills are not being systematically checked and/or embedded. Leaders need to provide further training for teachers on how to maximise the use of supporting adults during group sessions.

How can I feedback 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 provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 145164 |
| DfE registration number | 212/6003 |
| Local authority | Wandsworth |
| Inspection number | 10214601 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 59 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 19 |
| Number of part-time pupils | None |
| Proprietor | Beyond Autism |
| Chair | Professor David Croisdale-Appleby |
| Headteacher | Kieran Bird (Executive Headteacher) |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £67,310 |
| Telephone number | 0203 031 9707 |
| Website | www.beyondautismschools.org.uk |
| Email address | tramhouseschool@beyondautism.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 to 12 July 2018 |

Information about this school

- Tram House is an independent special school.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Pupils have a diagnosis of ASD and a wide range of associated difficulties.
- Pupils are placed at the school by a wide range of local authorities.
- The school has accommodation that it uses for sixth-form provision at the South Thames College campus in Wandsworth. The address is Wandsworth High St, London, SW18 2PP. The sixth form is taught by staff from Tram House.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school had its last standard inspection in July 2018 when it was judged to be outstanding and all independent school standards were met. The school had a material change inspection in August 2020. This change involved extending the age range of pupils from 14 to 19 to 11 to 19.
- The proprietor is Beyond Autism, a national charity that is overseen by a board of trustees. There is a chief executive officer. The governance of the school is overseen by a local governing body. The chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2021.
- The proprietor body is not listed on the government's Get Information about Schools website.
- The school's current registration is for a maximum number of 50 pupils. Leaders requested a material change to the Department for Education (DfE) to change this to 70 pupils. Pending the DfE's decision, leaders requested an exemption to increase the number of pupils on roll.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior staff. An inspector also held meetings with the chair of trustees, the chief executive officer and representatives from the local governing body, including the chair.

- Inspectors also held telephone meetings with local authority leaders to discuss safeguarding and the quality of education provided to pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including phonics), mathematics, PSHE and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with lead teachers/senior leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers, therapists, supporting adults and pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work and spoke to leaders about other subjects, including humanities.
- Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for safeguarding and behaviour. They reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including pre-employment checks on staff, risk assessments and case studies. Inspectors considered the views of parents, staff, pupils and other agencies to help evaluate the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence to evaluate compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered replies to Ofsted Parent View and the online surveys for pupils and staff.

The school's proposed change to increase the maximum number of pupils to 70.

- The school has applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.
- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**

Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Bedeau

Her Majesty's Inspector

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