

# Inspection of a good school: Talbot Specialist School

Lees Hall Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S8 9JP

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Inspection dates:

28 and 29 June 2022

## Outcome

Talbot Specialist School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and feel safe at Talbot Specialist School. Pupils are well cared for. Staff have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils are taught an ambitious curriculum that is adapted to the individual needs of pupils. Pupil's behaviour is managed well. This is because of the strong relationships between staff and pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school has well-trained staff and a range of specialist resources available for pupils to use. These include a hydrotherapy pool and trampoline therapy. The school has expanded its sixth form to provide more places. Students in sixth form are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe and healthy. They have dedicated nurture and wellbeing lessons that supports their physical and mental health. Pupils know staff would support them to resolve bullying issues if it were to happen.

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

Leaders have ensured the curriculum allows pupils to progress towards their education, health and care (EHC) plan targets. Many pupils follow the engagement model or are working towards it. This is for pupils working below the level of the national curriculum. Subject leaders are developing curriculum plans to further improve them. Current planning in some subjects does not specify how the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn should be delivered. In some subjects, this results in inconsistency and increases teachers' workload.

Teachers are well-trained and knowledgeable about the pupils they teach. Lessons are planned in detail and skilfully delivered by teachers who are passionate about supporting pupils with SEND. Teachers and support staff check pupils' understanding often and each lesson has high levels of adult support. Repetition and revisiting learning in different contexts help pupils to remember important knowledge. Lessons are presented clearly

with appropriate learning resources. This helps pupils to build on their knowledge and to remember more of the curriculum.

Teachers and support staff use assessment to ensure pupils achieve well. Assessments are matched to EHC plan targets and are used to inform the SEND annual review process. Parents and carers can add evidence of home learning using an online system. Pupils' work and assessments show that they make progress. Staff speak passionately about their work. However, some teachers report that preparation and assessment is too burdensome.

Pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 attend the main school. Students in sixth form spend some of the week attending provision based at The Sheffield College. This is to raise student aspirations. Most students speak highly of this experience. Sixth form students also attend 'The Bridge' provision next to the main school. The sixth form curriculum is planned to prepare students for adulthood. Lessons develop independence and include functional literacy and numeracy.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Pupils that are developing their reading skills are taught phonics by trained teachers and support staff. Pupils achieve well. Teachers are enthusiastic and teach phonics in a consistent way. Pupils enjoy phonics lessons and engage well. The school is participating in a national trial to further improve the teaching of phonics for pupils with SEND.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils behave well. Pupils follow 'Talbot rules' that include an encouragement to 'use kind hands' and 'be happy'. Staff have conversations with pupils to improve negative behaviour, should it occur. The personal, social and health education curriculum teaches pupils about conflict resolution and friendship. If pupils do have disagreements, pupils take part in 'build a friendship club' using building blocks and turn taking to rebuild relationships. Restrictive physical intervention is used only when necessary. If pupils become dysregulated, staff intervene quickly and use de-escalation strategies appropriately.

The wider curriculum is less extensive than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders have plans to address this. Most pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh's bronze award and some go on to the silver award. Pupils experience other faiths and religions through religious education immersion days. All pupils take part in 'discovery week' to learn different cultural experiences. Physical education is a strength of the school. It is supported by an effective outdoor curriculum that develops sports leaders. This has motivated pupils to join sports clubs outside of school. Staff are proud of this work.

Governance is strong. Governors understand their role to support leaders to improve the school. Governors know how to hold leaders to account. They are keen to contribute to the ethos of the school by ensuring the wellbeing of staff and making sure teachers' workload are manageable.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured there is a strong safeguarding culture across the different school sites. Staff are well trained and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. All staff receive regular updates and safeguarding training. This includes training by safeguarding leaders in school and training provided by the local authority.

Members of staff understand the risks that pupils face in the community. All staff have received training on preventing radicalisation and child criminal exploitation. Staff know how to report any safeguarding concerns. Pupils who may be at the risk of harm are closely monitored. Pupils feel safe and say staff support them.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Not all medium-term plans specify how the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn should be delivered. This reduces consistency and adds to teacher preparation. Leaders should ensure the detail of medium-term plans is improved by specifying how the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn can be taught.
- The wider curriculum offer is less extensive than prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils do not have the opportunity to experience the range of activities that were previously available to them. Leaders should ensure their wider curriculum plans provide all pupils with a rich range of personal development opportunities.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 28 and 29 March 2017.

## **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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107178
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228251
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	205
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mark Coppel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carolyn Sutcliffe
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.talbotlearningcommunity.org.uk">www.talbotlearningcommunity.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 and 29 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Talbot Specialist School is a special school for pupils aged between 11 and 19 years. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is located on the same site as Newfield Secondary School. Dining facilities are shared between the schools.
- The school makes use of 'The Bridge' provision for sixth-form students. It is located on the same site as Newfield Secondary School. The facilities are shared with Seven Hills School.
- The school makes use of Peaks Campus for sixth-form students. This is part of The Sheffield College.
- Students attending sixth form spend part of the week in 'The Bridge' and on other days at The Sheffield College.

- The school makes provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairments, physical disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.

## **Information about this inspection**

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, interim co-headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, curriculum pathway leaders, teachers and some non-teaching staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the school's local governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and physical education. Here, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. He reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The lead inspector also reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the lead inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school, as well as activities at the start and end of the day.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, including pupils who receive support to improve their reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils, and the online Parent View survey for parents.

## **Inspection team**

David Mills, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Berni Moorcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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