

The Michael Tippett School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133442
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	294094
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Maggie Woods

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	64
6th form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ruth Downing
Headteacher	Ms Jan Stogdon
Date of previous school inspection	20 April 2005
School address	Oakden Street Kennington London SE11 4UG
Telephone number	020 7735 9081
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a school for pupils with complex severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Just under half of the pupils have autistic spectrum disorder with severe learning difficulties. Many pupils also have physical difficulties. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and some have English as an additional language. No pupil travels to school independently. The school operates on two sites which are four and a half miles apart and is due to move to a new building on one site in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is satisfactory with some good features.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good and reflect the school's commitment to meet the needs of every child. As one parent told the inspection team, 'Staff have willingly made the adjustments required to ensure that his increasingly dependent needs are met and to make his school day meaningful and his curriculum activities appropriate'. Parents and carers value the good quality of their partnership with the school. Pupils' responses indicate that they enjoy school a great deal. They participate in the local community through activities such as a performance at the Young Vic, arts projects and college placements for older pupils. These creative projects promote their spiritual development well. The school values and respects the cultural backgrounds of its pupils and encourages understanding of others. The ethos and consistent expectations of all the staff promote pupils' social and moral development well. Pupils receive good guidance and support through their individual education plans which focus on the social and independence skills needed for adult life.

The curriculum is good. It has breadth and variety which contribute well to the good provision for pupils' personal development. It is enriched through a wide range of exciting and unusual activities, such as the chance to learn to play a brass instrument. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices and to develop the habits of healthy living. They are prepared well for their life after school and given very good support to make this transition. The school has appropriate measures in place to ensure pupils' safety.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in the core areas of the curriculum although standards are exceptionally low across the school as a result of their complex learning difficulties. Their learning is supported by good planning which is delivered through a multi sensory approach. This helps them to concentrate and build up basic skills. However, some lessons are not sufficiently well structured to ensure that pupils are learning as well as possible and there are not always enough opportunities for them to take an active part. The school does not do enough to check that pupils are making the progress that they should and to intervene if they are not. As a result, their opportunities for learning are limited.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership team, with the governors, has some awareness of the school's needs and difficulties. They work hard to manage the school on two sites several miles apart but this makes it difficult for them to concentrate on raising standards of teaching and learning to a consistently high standard as well as preparing for a major move to a new site in 2008. Recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled teachers is a continual challenge. As a result, the leadership team do not give sufficient attention to analysis of all the available information about the whole school's performance and do not use this information to take action in order to ensure school improvement. This is why, despite many strengths, teaching and pupils' achievement are just satisfactory. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Pupils in the post 16 group make satisfactory progress, though standards are exceptionally low. They develop the skills which they will need for adult life. They participate in a range of activities which enrich the curriculum through involvement in the local community. As a result, they become more independent and confident. They all achieve accreditation through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Towards Independence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the systems for rigorously monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's performance in order to inform planning for further improvement.
- Analyse information about pupils' progress in order to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching and plan interventions which will address weaknesses identified.
- Ensure that the leadership team has the capacity to fulfil their responsibility to ensure the quality of all aspects of the provision while at the same time managing the move to a new site.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Although pupils make satisfactory progress, standards are exceptionally low as a result of their complex learning difficulties. As pupils move through the school they develop improved communication, social and physical skills. They make more progress in physical education (PE) than in English and mathematics as a result of the emphasis that the school places on this subject. All pupils achieve accreditation through ASDAN Transition Challenge at the end of Key Stage 4 and Towards Independence at the end of the post 16 course.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils make most progress in this area. They usually achieve the personal development objectives set for them at their annual statement review meetings and in their individual education plans. One parent told the inspection team, 'I applaud the standard of pastoral care in the school'. Pupils build up their understanding in small, meaningful steps through the comprehensive programme for personal, social, health (PSHE) education and citizenship.

Pupils are confident and enthusiastic members of the school community, as is reflected in their good attendance. When they arrive at school in the morning, they are keen to get into the classroom and greet adults and other pupils. Some pupils will spontaneously approach another pupil to initiate communication and some can identify a friend through using photographs. During lessons, pupils' smiles and body language indicate their enjoyment, for example when they are engaged in multi-sensory work. Parents and carers indicate that their children are happy to be at school. Pupils contribute well to decisions and influence school life. For example, they have been actively involved in a design project to refurbish the changing rooms.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They take part in a good range of creative projects including art, music and drama. This encourages their spiritual development. They develop respect and understanding for each other's cultural backgrounds, for example in religious education (RE) lessons. Their behaviour is good. Pupils develop independent working skills and successfully practise and build up their communication skills across the curriculum. This prepares them well for future life.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living, through the many opportunities for physical activity, and through the healthy diet provided. They understand the importance of making healthy choices.

The clear and comprehensive behaviour management policy is effective in ensuring that pupils' behaviour is good overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are based on good planning which reflects a detailed understanding of each pupil and their current level of achievement. This ensures that there are clear objectives to promote small steps of progress for each individual. The multi-sensory approach to curriculum delivery enables pupils to access learning in a way that suits their learning style and individual needs. There is good use of a range of support for pupils' communication including signing and symbols. This helps all the pupils to access learning in the most meaningful way. In better lessons, pupils are encouraged to interact with each other. For example, in a mathematics lesson, one pupil used his head switch to give instructions to another to count a certain number of drum beats. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent across the school. In less effective lessons, pupils are required to sit and wait passively for their turn in whole class sessions. As a result, the pace of these lessons is too slow to engage them and their opportunities for learning are limited. Opportunities for learning are sometimes lost when teachers do not provide enough scope for pupils to think for themselves and make choices.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well suited to pupils' learning needs and individual difficulties. The good quality of the curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' good personal development. It provides an appropriate and well planned core of English, mathematics, PSHE and PE which helps pupils to learn the basic skills which are important for them. It offers exciting opportunities for additional activities which enrich pupils' experience. These include good links with the local community for a range of creative activities. For example, pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a brass instrument. There are some opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons but there are not sufficient, high quality resources to be used effectively as tools for learning.

For pupils in the post 16 classes, there are good opportunities to prepare for the next stage of their lives through the focus on independence and basic living skills, alongside continued

development in the core areas of English, mathematics and ICT. This is an appropriate programme which enables pupils to become more confident and independent young adults. They are helped to develop independent travel skills and have made a very good short film to show their achievements as part of the London Film Festival. The curriculum is extended for them through other stimulating activities such as football training with Fulham Football Club and access to courses at the local further education college. Although all pupils are able to accredit their achievement through the ASDAN Towards Independence scheme, there are a small number of pupils for whom this is not sufficiently challenging.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school's ethos emphasises the value of each individual. The clear framework for individual education plans ensures that lesson planning is well tailored to pupils' needs. The school provides pupils with good individually prepared resources, such as communication or lunchtime passports, to help them participate fully in school life. The clear behaviour management policy is very successful. There are good systems to encourage pupils to take up healthy lifestyles.

Planning for the 'person centred transition reviews' is very good. It enables pupils and their families to be fully involved in a discussion about their future with the whole multi professional team who will be supporting them with the aim of ensuring a successful transition to the next stage of their lives.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has good knowledge of the individual needs of all the pupils and is accurate in her judgements about the quality of some aspects of the school's work. The school's work is underpinned by clear aims and values which are modelled by the leadership team and supported by the governing body. This has promoted pupils' good personal development. The leadership team are currently involved in planning for the new building due to open in 2008 in addition to their responsibility to monitor and strengthen the quality of provision at both the current sites. This is a challenge for a small leadership team and they are too stretched by the volume of work involved to be able to give the school improvement issues the time and attention which they need.

The programme for regular monitoring of the quality of teaching is not linked to an evaluation of the progress which pupils make in core curriculum areas or through their individual education plans because this analysis is at an early stage of development. Information which is gathered through monitoring is not brought together to gain a picture of whole school performance and then used as a basis for whole school improvement planning. As a result, teaching and achievement remain just satisfactory.

Subject leadership is being introduced but is not yet fully effective in ensuring that teachers are held to account for the quality and effectiveness of provision in their subject area.

The governing body is supportive of the school and has a good understanding of current issues such as the difficulties of operating on two sites and the need to maintain a full team of appropriately skilled staff. It is less clear about issues of quality of teaching and learning and does not interrogate information about school performance which is presented at its meetings in order to hold the school to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Michael Tippett School, London, SE11 4UG

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit very much. Now I am writing to tell you what I found out about the school.

I was pleased to see how much you enjoy school and how you become more independent during your time there. You work hard to achieve the targets that are set for you. I was glad to see how well you behave. There are some very exciting things for you to do at school. I enjoyed watching the brass band practising - they make a wonderful sound!

The headteacher works very hard to make sure that you are all safe and happy. She is keen to make the school even better for you. I have asked her to check how well you are doing so that your teachers can make sure that they are helping you to do the very best that you can. I have suggested that she needs some more help because she is very busy running the school and getting ready for your move to your new school next year.

I hope that you continue to try very hard in lessons and enjoy being at school.

Good luck with your move to the new school next year!

Yours sincerely

Maggie Woods
Lead inspector