

Tuke School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100880
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	323365
Inspection dates	15–16 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan

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 (total)	55
Sixth form	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Maggs
Headteacher	Ms Heidi Tully
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2005
School address	4 Woods Road Peckham London SE15 2PX
Telephone number	020 7639 5584
Fax number	020 7635 8937

Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Tuke School provides for learners who have severe or profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who have severe physical disabilities and additional complex medical needs. All students have statements of special education needs and the majority have difficulties with language and communication. Many have no speech. Learners come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds but the biggest groups are of White European, Black African and Caribbean heritages. Around half of the learners are eligible for free school meals. Boys significantly outnumber girls. The school is set to move to a new purpose-built facility in 2010. The school has achieved the Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Tuke School provides exceptionally well for its vulnerable students. All are genuinely happy to come to Tuke and this is demonstrated by a parent's comment - 'My non-verbal son jumps into the bus every morning. He enjoys school.' Those parents and carers returning questionnaires echo this evaluation of the school's work as do the school's staff. Another parent, reflecting the views of many others, noted, 'We are a hundred per cent happy with the school.' Since the last inspection, Tuke has sustained and improved its previous good practice in providing for its students despite the increasingly complex needs of its intake and the challenges presented to the leadership team by the new building. Carefully targeted staff training that has involved all teachers and support assistants has also contributed much to this success.

Leadership and management are excellent at all levels of the school. The school has a generally accurate, although modest, evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement. It has rightly identified, for example, that it provides outstanding personal care, guidance and support for its students. This, together with a good curriculum that is personalised, as far as resources and the environment allow, underpins the students' excellent progress. New middle managers, appointed since the last inspection, are working collaboratively to develop the curriculum for those students who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that it parallels that for students who have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are moving towards integrating assessment and recording practices into the new schemes of work.

Although standards are low, students of all ages, needs and backgrounds achieve exceptionally well in relation to their starting points, particularly considering the profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities that many students have on entry to the school. They make great strides in their personal learning targets and, above all, in their communication skills. Those who can gain genuine practical skills that support their daily living and work-based experiences. Tuke really succeeds in its aim of making its students 'lifelong learners'.

Students' personal development and well-being, including aspects of spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development are good because of the high-quality guidance and support they receive. They respond very well to the praise and rewards they receive throughout the day. As a result of the calm and sensitive support from all adults in the classrooms and around the school, students are safe, often persevere well, and make progress towards their individual and challenging targets. They prepare well for the next stage of their lives and many make the best contributions they can to their small community.

Learning and teaching throughout the school are excellent. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to ensure the safety of all staff and students but also with a strong focus on the needs of the individual. Support staff are deployed effectively so that students receive outstanding support and positive encouragement. Annual review procedures for individual students are excellent, with each student very well known by staff. Nevertheless, the school has yet to find a way of vividly recording the sustained progress students make in their social skills from their starting points. Governance is good and supports and challenges the school well. Governors, well guided by an able chairperson, have a real care for the future of Tuke's students. Links with parents, external and support agencies are excellent. The school is an exceptionally good ambassador for its students, ensuring that their rights are protected and their needs met.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

'I am proud of what my students achieve', commented the teacher in charge of the sixth form. Close working with other staff responsible for the different groups of students has led to an imaginative and creative development of the curriculum. This has been very well orchestrated to allow scope for wider opportunities to place students in situations of 'managed risk' so that they can further develop independence. Activities such as school journeys, including those overseas, are exceptionally well used to allow students to 'learn, transfer and consolidate' skills for living. As a result of carefully tailored individual programmes and outstanding personalised care, guidance and support, post-16 learners make excellent progress towards their targets. Students are made fully aware that they are valued members of the community and grow in confidence in managing new settings and in communicating with an ever-increasing range of adults. Each learner has an accreditation profile which shows their gains in skills and allows for a smooth transition to the next stage of their education, care and training. Since the last inspection, a manager in charge of the sixth form has been appointed. It is now very well led.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take forward plans to integrate assessment and recording practices into the revised curriculum for those students who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Find ways to document the excellent progress students make in their social skills from the first home assessment visit.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are well below average but the achievement of all groups of students is at least good and is mostly outstanding. When students join the school their starting points are exceptionally low when compared with those typical for their ages. Many students face additional learning challenges because of complex medical conditions (sometimes degenerative), impaired mobility and difficulties in communication.

Students make brisk progress towards their personal, behavioural and social targets because of the high-quality individual attention they receive. These personal targets are not only challenging but are also well matched to build on students' previous learning and allow them to succeed. As a result, students are well motivated to strive to make the best possible progress in essential skills. Students make the fastest progress in their communication skills with some making giant strides from signing and the use of visual prompts to simple sentences. Around three quarters of the students successfully achieve the targets in their individual education plans. Those who do not match the expectations in these plans are usually dogged by illness or by difficulties with equipment. By the time students move on from the sixth form all gain some certification in alternative accreditation modules such as meal preparation, independent living skills, planning money and creativity. The school's records of students' long-term progress indicate convincingly that it is exceptionally effective in helping each individual student to succeed in the 'Tuke Aims'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make rapid progress in their personal development because of very clear individual care plans. These enable them, with support, to eat healthily and to participate in a wide range of physical activities. Sailing, disabled cycling and football, for example, are clear favourites. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good with students managing the frustrations of their conditions increasingly well as they progress through the school. They respond well to the 'lets make a deal' strategies and generally to interventions by adults. As a result, they are able to listen to each other in lessons and in the school council and enjoy each other's company. Although students' attendance is sometimes below national figures for the age range, there is almost no unauthorised absence. Most absences are because of students' medical needs. The overwhelming majority of the students will be dependent on other adults for the rest of their lives and only a very few will move to the world of work. Nevertheless, students prepare well for the next stage, be it college, residential care or a supported training environment. Students carry out a range of class responsibilities, work with staff to keep their school tidy, take part in local community events and raise funds for charities. These activities encourage a sense of responsibility. As a result, students' social and moral development is good. Relationships between students from different cultural traditions are also good. They accept each other as they are and enjoy being together. For example, students were thrilled by the musical assembly, including the opening hymn.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Careful planning for the learning of each individual student enables them to make excellent progress, particularly in independence and in communication skills. Very purposeful collaborative working between teaching staff and other adults ensures that students are well supported in behaving well and in concentrating to the best of their ability. All staff use signing efficiently to aid communication with students and music is very well integrated into lessons so that pupils can enjoy the rhythms and recall earlier learning. Information and communication technology resources are also well used to illustrate ideas through pictorial representation. Staff are unfailingly courteous to students, and model good teamwork and positive relationships. As a result, learners trust the adults around them and are willing to take risks with new and varied activities. Teachers make regular checks of students' progress, meeting daily with their support teams to record the students' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

At Tuke, the curriculum plans for each student are carefully matched to their personal needs. These plans are interpreted effectively to enable students to become lifelong learners so that they gain as much independence as possible. The school has worked extensively on its curriculum for those who have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is well on the way to planning a parallel and complementary curriculum for the increasing number of students who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students enjoy a range of enrichment activities, visits and themed events. Older students are helped to gain as much independence as possible through shopping trips, college visits and the 'can do' week where

they experience activities from gardening to arts and crafts. Priority is given to new technologies so that all students have excellent opportunities to learn a range of communication modes. There is a carefully managed and individualised programme to support learners in planning transitions to the next stage of education and living.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for safeguarding students are exceptionally robust and risk assessments are in place for all students. Students' achievement and well-being are at the forefront of Tuke School's mission to 'inspire everyone to learn everywhere'. Personal guidance is outstanding, as are links with parents and external support agencies. Speech therapists liaise closely with school staff so that individual learning plans, targets and frequent reviews support the students' social and communication skills particularly well. Pupils are taught as effectively as possible to stay safe and to manage their feelings.

Information on the individual's attainment and progress against their starting points at Tuke is carefully managed, recorded centrally at regular intervals and used effectively to inform the annual reviews. This very good understanding of each student's progress, however, is not always translated into a readily available picture of how successfully students move on in their social skills from their point of entry to Tuke.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The impact of the excellent senior leadership and management at Tuke is evident in the school's sustained success since the last inspection and in the improvements made over that period. The school has improved the already good provision for individual students despite an ever-widening range of complex needs and the limitations of its current accommodation. The headteacher's high expectations are shared by staff at all levels because of the systematic approach to highly effective training and professional development for staff. The school has rightly identified that the curriculum and the recording of tiny steps in students' progress in social skills need to be developed further to support even more effectively the increased number of students who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Generally accurate, albeit modest, self-evaluation and very careful planning for Tuke's future development, particularly for the move to the new school, as well as excellent teamwork among all staff, demonstrate clearly that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Governance is good and provides well-targeted support for the school, particularly in relation to its planned move to its new site. Increasingly, governors are making links with school departments and gaining first-hand information on day-to-day practice so that they are more able to challenge the school if necessary. Other than promoting community cohesion effectively within its own community and beyond, the school is limited in what it can do owing to the complex special needs of its students. Nevertheless, it evaluates the impact of its numerous community initiatives and partnerships on its students and their families and carers.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
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	

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

03 July 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Tuke School, London, SE15 2PX

Thank you for welcoming me to Tuke and allowing me to share your singing, assembly and other activities. I really enjoyed sharing time with you.

I decided that Tuke is an excellent school because:

- you make exceptionally good progress
- you and your parents are happy with the school
- the headteacher and all staff look after you really well
- teachers make sure that lessons improve your skills
- the school makes sure that you have lots of exciting things to do - remember Lanzarote and Cyprus
- you are safe and you all seem to enjoy school.

Tuke will be even better when you move to the new school and when:

- planned changes to the curriculum are fully in place
- there is a bigger picture of how well all of you improve your social skills.

Well done all of you. I am sure you will go on working really well with the adults who do so much to help you.

Yours faithfully

Sheila Nolan

Lead Inspector