

Beatrice Tate School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 100989 |
| Local Authority | Tower Hamlets |
| Inspection number | 323388 |
| Inspection dates | 18–19 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Anne Duffy HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 61 |
| Sixth form | 22 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Miss Susan Smith |
| Headteacher | Mr Alan Black |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 June 2006 |
| School address | St Jude's Road London E2 9RW |
| Telephone number | 020 7739 6249 |
| Fax number | 020 7613 1507 |
| Email address | admin@beatricetate.towerhamlets.sch.uk |

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector visited nine lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, headteacher and staff and talked to pupils. The inspection observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies, procedures and its monitoring of pupils' progress, including video recordings. The inspection also took account of 48 returned questionnaires from parents and 57 from staff.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the curriculum
- the impact of the recently established assessment framework on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress
- the leadership and management of the school.

Information about the school

Beatrice Tate is an inner city special school for 60 pupils aged eleven to nineteen years who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and a significant and increasing number have medical needs. Pupils can join the school at any point. The majority live within Tower Hamlets but some travel from other London boroughs. A high proportion of pupils spend up to two hours a day travelling to and from school.

The school has gained the Artsmark silver award, the Financial Management Standard in Schools and has Investors in People status. As part of the local authority's Building Schools for the Future programme, it has submitted plans to extend significantly over the next few years, developing a new sixth form block and offering more opportunities for community use.

Further information about the school

| | School's figures | School's figures compared with other schools |
|--|------------------|--|
| School size | 58 | Below average |
| Free school meals | 90% | Above average |
| Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities | 100% | Above average |
| Proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups | 88% | Above average |
| Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language | 93% | Above average |
| Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs | 100% | Above average |

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Beatrice Tate is an outstanding school which is fully committed to continuous improvement. It is dynamically led by its headteacher and deputy and all staff strive to provide their pupils with the best possible educational opportunities. Meeting individual needs is at the heart of what the school does particularly well. All success is celebrated and individual difference is respected. As a result, pupils achieve well and their personal development is outstanding. Recent very positive changes to the curriculum demonstrate the school's commitment to providing an extremely high level of challenge and enjoyment for all pupils as the range of their needs increases. Although it does not always take a leading role in new developments, the governing body promotes improvement well and is very supportive of the school. The school demonstrates that it has excellent capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the new processes for target setting and assessment make a clear and measurable difference to the progress that pupils make by:
 - ensuring that there is a shared and consistent understanding of what constitutes satisfactory, good, or outstanding progress
 - analysing in increasing detail the progress made over time by individual pupils and groups of pupils.
- The governing body should develop robust systems to hold the school to account in order to play a more strategic role in school development.

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

1

The school has worked hard to track and monitor the progress of pupils which is often made in very small steps. Although levels of attainment are low in comparison with national expectations, all pupils make good, and some make outstanding, progress. The increased focus upon individual targets in every lesson supports this

good progress and is beginning to challenge pupils' own expectations of what they can do.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They move safely around the different areas and demonstrate that they feel secure in a range of situations. They respond well to the multi-sensory experiences in the studios and prepare sensibly for educational visits, such as when going out to the library. Due to sensitive handling by adults, pupils react well when, for example, they need to be placed in a lifting hoist or are trying a new piece of equipment.

Behaviour overall is outstanding. Pupils respond well to the detailed behaviour plans and build up excellent relationships with staff. They know what is expected of them and are tolerant of each other. Individual eating and drinking plans support healthy eating and, where appropriate, pupils make individual choices about what they will eat. With encouragement they are willing to take risks; they make the most of opportunities to dance, move and swim and to carry out responsible jobs, such as taking the register to reception. As a result they develop the independence and resilience which will help them in future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning? | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 4 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe? | 1 |
| How well do pupils behave? | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles? | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community? | 1 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 1 |
| Pupils' attendance and punctuality | 2 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? | 1 |

The quality of the school's work

The curriculum has recently been reviewed and revised and it is now highly effective because it underpins the school's strategy for individual pupil assessment and target setting. As a consequence, the curriculum now reflects more closely the pupils' social, emotional, physical and communication needs. There is an appropriate balance of subjects within a wide range of experiences which are well tailored to the school population. Different methods of communication are skilfully included to support pupils' language and literacy development.

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

As a result of the changes to assessment, teaching staff plan and deliver their lessons in a different way. It is too early to fully judge the impact of this upon pupil progress over time, but the early indications are that it has been a very positive initiative for school improvement. Extra attention is paid to how well pupils are progressing against their targets and all staff contribute to this evaluation, so that an individual and comprehensive record can be built up. Teaching is imaginative and very good use is made of resources, especially interactive and multi-sensory technology. Although some pupils occasionally spend a little too long waiting for others, lessons generally move along at a stimulating pace. Pupils' success is evident and demonstrated in their positive responses, their individual contributions, and in their work.

The school provides a very high quality of support, guidance and care. The strong links made between the school and parents are very well supported by the home-school liaison officer. Recent developments, such as the use of video to demonstrate to parents what their child is achieving in school, have made annual review meetings more personal and informative.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| High quality teaching and purposeful learning | 2 |
| Effective assessment and academic guidance | 2 |
| An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations | 1 |
| Support, guidance and care | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's determined drive for improvement is strongly supported by the management team and the full range of staff. Despite the difficulties created by the relatively high staff turn-over, continuity of approach is maintained by good support and well planned professional development. All contribute to the evaluation of the school's work so that when new developments are introduced, they are done so with a shared understanding and commitment. Innovative use has been made of resources, particularly in the introduction of new technologies, so that the school provides a rich and stimulating environment for learning.

Arrangements for safeguarding are secure and the school does much good work in involving other services in order to provide additional support for pupils and their families. Some good moves have been made to extend the school's role within its community and the hydrotherapy pool provides a popular resource for local groups. The small governing body fulfils its responsibilities diligently and effectively. It is aware that more could be done to systematically provide challenge in order to lead as well as support the next steps in the school's development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils | 1 |
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| Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination | 1 |
| Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective | 1 |
| Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met | 2 |
| Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being | 1 |
| Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services | 1 |
| Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion | 2 |
| Deploying resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Sixth form

Almost all students choose to move into the sixth form from Year 11. Although based within the main building, the sixth form provides students with a variety of enriching experiences which take them outside the school. Most notable of these are the opportunities offered by the 'Hotel in the Park'. Here students develop and use the skills needed for everyday living. The leadership and management of the school are aware that more could be done to extend these experiences in a way that would further the currently good progress made by the students. Nevertheless, they demonstrate outstanding leadership. This is reflected in the way that they have sought and created the opportunities that are currently provided and have rightly placed sixth form development at the forefront of future plans.

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| The overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 2 |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are positive about the school and this satisfaction is reflected clearly in the high number of responses to the questionnaire. Nevertheless, some expressed understandable concern about what will happen to their child when he or she leaves school. This is an issue which the school is doing its best to address with providers of adult services. As one parent writes, 'the school is doing everything to make the transition go smoothly'. Another parent justifiably writes, 'The all round presentation and conduct makes me proud that my child is part of this wonderfully staffed school'.

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|---|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006-7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006-7, 46% of schools were judged good. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006-7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006-7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

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| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Achievement: | an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |

02 December 2008



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beatrice Tate School, London E2 9RW

Thank you for helping me to learn about your school. I really enjoyed my visit. It was good to meet so many of you and to see how well you are doing. I am writing this letter to tell you what I found.

I think your school is outstanding. You all seem to enjoy school, you are safe and well cared for. I could see that some of you have tried very hard to improve your behaviour and this has helped you to learn more. There are plenty of interesting things for you to do both in and out of school.

Your headteacher leads the school very well and all the staff work hard to help you. I think they could use your targets even more to check that you all make as much progress as you can. The governors of the school can also help by making sure that they know in more detail how well the school is doing and what it could do to make things even better for you.

I hope that you will all try your best and I wish you good luck for the future.

Anne Duffy
Her Majesty's Inspector

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