

Talbot Specialist School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107178
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	336822
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Pauline Hilling-Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ruth Tiddy
Headteacher	Ms Judith Smith
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
School address	Lees Hall Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S8 9JP
Telephone number	0114 2507394
Fax number	0114 2507857
Email address	enquiries@talbot.sheffield.sch.uk

Age group	11–19
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Inspection number	336822

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at plans, policies, students' work, student questionnaires and 36 parental questionnaires

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

- the rate of students' progress, especially in mathematics
- the impact of the leadership of the school on improving teaching and learning
- the way in which the curriculum has raised students' aspirations for the future.

Information about the school

Talbot is a specialist special school for secondary and post-16 students. Almost all of the students have severe or profound learning difficulty. A small minority of students have severe medical conditions, a few have additional specialist communication needs and a few students present behaviour that challenges. A minority of the students are from minority ethnic groups. Very few students are asylum seekers and a very small number are looked after by the local authority. The school's specialism for cognition and learning was gained in September 2008.

The school moved into new purpose built accommodation which is co-located with Newfield Comprehensive in January 2009. The two schools share the same dining facilities and other sports areas.

The school holds Investors in People Standard, gained Team Teach Gold Standard Award in July 2009 and Healthy School's Award in November 2009.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Talbot Specialist School is outstanding. Students make outstanding progress, especially in communication and problem solving skills. Progress is the same for all age groups and regardless of the level of learning difficulty faced by the student.

Behaviour is outstanding. Students often work extremely hard to control their behaviour, with guidance from the staff, and this contributes well to students' learning. When staff celebrate and praise achievement in lessons pride shines out from the students.

Through the progress students make in lessons and their achievement in personal development students are being exceptionally well prepared for the future. Specialist status makes an excellent contribution to students' learning and progress and to the partnerships the school has with other schools and colleges in the area. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used exceptionally well to enhance the communication systems used by the students. Relationships are warm and supportive yet with high expectations of what is to be achieved by each individual in every lesson. Support staff are highly skilled and precisely targeted in lessons to enable individuals and groups to achieve their potential. Transition programmes are well planned to ensure that students can exercise their choices and aspirations about destinations after school. A holiday club has been provided this year but there has not yet been time to provide the full range of lunchtime clubs the facilities could offer. Exemplary partnership with ethnic minority families has had a significant effect on the achievement of minority ethnic students because a trusting and confident relationship has been established with their families.

No stone has been left unturned in the detailed monitoring and evaluation carried out by the governors and upon which the highly effective improvement planning procedures have been based. Since the last inspection there have been very significant improvements in teaching and learning, curriculum and achievement; all these areas are now outstanding. This track record of improvement illustrates well the ambition and drive of the leadership team. Through rigorous and unflinching self-evaluation the school is aware of its strengths and priorities for improvement. Plans are carefully focused to achieve these and evaluated for their impact. There is a very strong commitment to training and coaching and school development through various initiatives. This illustrates well the outstanding capacity that the school has to improve even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Students achieve outstanding results in all their work. It is inappropriate to judge

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

attainment in comparison with students in mainstream schools due to the nature and complexity of the needs of the students who attend the school. The progress of those students with the most profound and multiple learning difficulties is measured against personal, challenging targets that fall outside the bounds of formal assessment procedures or levels of attainment. These challenging targets are fully met or exceeded. Targets set for other students are equally challenging and evaluation shows that most of these targets are met. This confirms the view of inspectors, formed from observation of lessons, that all students are making outstanding progress. Students with additional communication needs make equally outstanding progress as other students because they achieve well in a range of communication systems including the use of sign language and symbols. Students of all abilities have gained a wide range of accreditations by the time they leave school. The rate of progress in mathematics, while slightly slower, is also outstanding. Students with physical movement needs achieve exceptionally well because they receive outstanding support in the 'state of the art' hydrotherapy pool. Students' hydrotherapy regimes are informed by specialist yoga techniques and sophisticated light and sound programmes.

- Students have surpassed expectations in their personal development, for example, their confidence in using the dining room shared with Newfield School has grown enormously despite initial concerns of a few parents. Students are encouraged to be as independent as possible. Students adhere very well with the school's drive to encourage them to eat healthily or choose food appropriate to cultural beliefs. All the students contribute to the choices that are made for the development of the school. All students do their very best to attend whenever they can but illness and medical conditions, sometimes involving long absences, reduce the time a few students can be in school. Those unable to attend are well supported and make increasing use of ICT to help them to learn from home.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Students achieve outstanding results in all their work. It is inappropriate to judge attainment in comparison with students in mainstream schools due to the nature and complexity of the needs of the students who attend the school. The progress of those students with the most profound and multiple learning difficulties is measured against personal, challenging targets that fall outside the bounds of formal assessment procedures or levels of attainment. These challenging targets are fully met or exceeded. Targets set for other students are equally challenging and evaluation shows that most of these targets are met. This confirms the view of inspectors, formed from observation of lessons, that all students are making outstanding progress. Students with additional communication needs make equally outstanding progress as other students because they achieve well in a range of communication systems including the use of sign language and symbols. Students of all abilities have gained a wide range of accreditations by the time they leave school. The rate of progress in mathematics, while slightly slower, is also outstanding. Students with physical movement needs achieve

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

exceptionally well because they receive outstanding support in the 'state of the art' hydrotherapy pool. Students' hydrotherapy regimes are informed by specialist yoga techniques and sophisticated light and sound programmes.

Students have surpassed expectations in their personal development, for example, their confidence in using the dining room shared with Newfield School has grown enormously despite initial concerns of a few parents. Students are encouraged to be as independent as possible. Students adhere very well with the school's drive to encourage them to eat healthily or choose food appropriate to cultural beliefs. All the students contribute to the choices that are made for the development of the school. All students do their very best to attend whenever they can but illness and medical conditions, sometimes involving long absences, reduce the time a few students can be in school. Those unable to attend are well supported and make increasing use of ICT to help them to learn from home.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is outstanding because all lessons are planned in detail to extend learning for every student. Activities are appropriately challenging and exciting so all students work hard and enjoy learning. Specialist teachers ensure that learning in specialist lessons is outstanding because it is based on how learning progresses in that subject as well as how learning is progressing for individual students. A comprehensive training programme ensures that each teacher's expertise is continuously developed and shared both within school and with the school's partners. Individual students' learning needs are identified through careful assessment and recording of progress.

The outstanding curriculum is extended through collaboration with other secondary schools across the city as well as tertiary colleges and other organisations. It is well organised, broad and balanced and based on a clear set of principles about progression and continuity. This ensures that the students' personal development is continually progressing. There are many memorable experiences including taking part in productions such as Grease, watching a Nativity with live animals and visiting the cinema at the end of a programme of study. The wide range of accreditations available for students to achieve as they progress through school reflects their growing maturity. The extent to which the curriculum is modified to meet individual student needs is exemplary and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The number of extra-curricular activities offered at lunchtime is limited, restricting opportunities for students to be involved in purposeful activity at this time.

There are many outstanding ways in which the school cares, guides and supports the students. Staff know the students very well and are highly committed to ensuring that their needs are met. Exemplary working together with other organisations that support the students ensures that any obstacles to achieving the best outcomes are quickly resolved. Huge attention is paid to keeping students safe, healthy and protected from risk. Students respond by expecting to be as independent as possible and managing risk very well. Students manage their own medication wherever possible with varying levels of support. Some students move very quickly down the corridor to lunch avoiding slower moving students expertly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. She has been the pivotal point over a long period of time in creating the vision and driving the development of the school to where it is today. The clarity of the cutting edge vision has been shared by the highly committed and capable governing body. The senior leadership team has been grown almost entirely from within the school based on exemplary leadership coaching. The leadership team responsibilities mirror the established priorities for the school and, as such, the ambition for the school is moving even further at a rapid pace. Leadership of teaching has been a priority with the result that outstanding assessment underpins all learning. This has ensured outstanding achievement. A strong system of delegation and accountability has been put in place which ensures, for example, that safeguarding procedures and health and safety are very robust. The school is a landmark in inclusion. Co-location with Newfield secondary school is a living partnership subscribed to by both schools. This means that the inclusion of all students in gaining the most from the provision offered by both schools has been developed to a very high level. Processes and procedures to ensure equality for all are supported through the Achievement for All action research project. Community cohesion is exemplary. Links with the local minority ethnic community and video conferencing on a global level has a significant impact on cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Most students progress into the sixth form; they are joined at this stage by a few students new to the school. This progression is taken into consideration in curriculum

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

planning so that there is no repetition of work, and progression and continuity are maintained. The curriculum enables high achievement in the functional skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, supported by a very wide variety of vocational options both in school and at college. Students are also supported well in work experience placements. The provision 'upstairs' is dedicated to the oldest students and is seen as an area to aspire to. It includes a large terrace as well as a common room for students to access at break and lunchtime. Students are very pleased with the common room and say that it makes them feel very grown up. Through the individual person-centred planning students are able to choose their own pathways, sometimes gradually building up their skills in a particular subject and sometimes extending their experience across different subject areas. As well as the opportunities for work-related learning provided by horticulture, computer skills and art at college in Hillsborough, the subjects offered also develop skills useful in helping students to live independently when they leave school. For example, students are taught to use the telephone. Similarly, a coherent programme of relationship education, carefully tailored to meet their individual needs, helps to affirm students' confidence about their rights and responsibilities. Where teaching is outstanding, students deepen their understanding of their own identity in preparation for making future choices. Senior leaders have a very clear understanding of students' needs and very high expectations of students. As a result senior leaders are constantly reviewing and evaluating the work of the sixth form extremely effectively. This means they are active in seeking out the right work experience placements and accreditations to meet all students' needs and they are very effective in supporting and planning students' transition to the next stage in their lives when they leave the sixth form.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The following are typical comments.

- 'She loves going to school.'
- 'The staff are really wonderful and help to meet our child's needs, listen and work with us as parents.'
- 'My child has achieved beyond my expectations. Pastoral care is superb.'

Most feel the staff are very approachable and care very well for their child. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. A very few say that the school does not communicate with them well or help them support their child's learning. Inspectors

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

could find no evidence to substantiate this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Talbot Specialist School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 137 pupils registered at the school and 60 in the sixth form.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	76	2	12	1	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	82	1	6	1	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	65	4	24	1	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	59	6	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	76	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	59	3	18	1	6	1	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	59	5	29	1	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	71	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	65	4	24	1	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	59	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	59	5	29	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	47	7	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	71	3	18	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Talbot Specialist School, Sheffield S8 9JP

Thank you for being so kind and friendly this week when I visited your school. It was a pleasure to spend time with you in your lovely new building. Everyone is so proud of belonging to the school; it makes a very special atmosphere.

Talbot is an outstanding school. All the staff and governors make sure that you can do your very best because they think very carefully about what they plan to make sure that each person is happy and successful. This means that you learn very well and have a lot of fun doing so.

It was especially brilliant to see you having lunch and being friends with the students from Newfield. As you have quite a lot of time after lunch I have asked the school to: provide more activities for you to go to in the lunchbreak.

Your headteacher has made sure that you have one of the finest new buildings I have ever seen. She has made sure that you have nothing but the best in every way and you left me in no doubt that you appreciate it.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Pauline Hilling-Smith

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.