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21 June 2016

Ms Heidi Tully
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Heidi Tully

Short inspection of Tuke School

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 2016 with Gary Rawlings, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be outstanding in October 2011.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is a welcoming and inspirational place. Leaders have successfully adapted the provision to meet the changing needs of pupils placed at the school. There are now more pupils with severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders and fewer pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. You have ensured that pupils' individual needs are carefully identified when they join the school so that they can be effectively supported to do as well as possible.

You are fully committed to an inclusive approach to learning. Pupils spend as much time as possible working with their peers and teachers. Most therapy sessions take place in the spacious classrooms so that occupational and speech and language therapists are able to see how individual pupils learn and what their needs are. This helps therapists to make accurate assessments and share effective strategies with teachers and support staff. A large physical exploration room is used by the whole class at the same time and allows a range of sensory needs to be met without withdrawing individuals to work in isolation. All indoor and outdoor learning spaces are fully accessible and positioned close to the specialist health or hygiene facilities that pupils may need. Consequently, little learning time is lost, pupils improve their social skills and the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity is upheld.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. Procedures for tracking how much progress pupils are making have been reviewed again this year to take account of the new national curriculum, reporting assessments without levels and the requirements of the new code of practice. A highly effective assessment system takes account of a wide range of progress measures to assess pupils' cognition and learning; social, communication and sensory skills; physical development and levels of independence. Teachers draw on comprehensive information about every pupil to establish accurate starting points. They make regular checks to judge how successful pupils are in reaching their targets. Parents work in partnership with staff to agree the content of education, health and care plans. They feel that the new assessment arrangements provide them with a comprehensive picture of how well their child is doing. This helps parents to agree any necessary adjustments to their child's provision and start to plan the next steps to be taken. Leaders are still evaluating the success of this new system and are tracking the quality of outcomes carefully. The evidence currently available identifies no significant gaps between the performance of different groups, classes or cohorts. All pupils are on target to make at least the expected rate of progress. A significant number will have made rapid progress towards their individual targets and are likely to exceed expectations by the end of this academic year.

Systems for allowing staff, pupils and parents to access school information and communicate effectively are now very effective. The school's website is accessible and informative. You have correctly recognised that further improvements are still needed regarding the quality of some of the information that is uploaded to ensure that it reflects the success of the school and its pupils. You have therefore appointed a new digital technology and website leader from September to develop the website further. Staff keep in touch with parents through regular reports, daily diaries and chat books. Parents are invited to visit the school and share their children's learning experiences whenever they can. For example, some parents join their child for hydrotherapy sessions in the school's pool and attend assemblies. Training sessions for parents are provided throughout the year so that they can support their child's learning at home more confidently. Parents are appreciative of the work of leaders and staff and recognise how their children have improved since starting at the school.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and absence rates are low. The attendance of pupils is monitored very closely. Only a small number of pupils are persistently absent and any concerns are followed up with parents without delay. Overall attendance rates are comparable to the national average for all mainstream schools and have been sustained at this level for a number of years. You monitor the destinations of leavers very carefully to ensure that they remain safe and continue to be successful on their new courses and placements. For example, you are seeking to collaborate more closely with further education providers to ensure that the needs of your pupils continue to be met when they leave.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and monitored carefully. Systems and procedures

are checked and reviewed by leaders regularly to ensure that they remain effective. All the required staff employment checks have been completed and recorded appropriately. The required training in safer recruitment practices and child protection has taken place and school policies take account of the latest statutory guidance. Staff receive regular updates and work together to ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible. They are fully aware of the risks that more vulnerable pupils may face, both inside and outside of school. They know what to do if they have any concerns and take action promptly. Procedures for carrying out therapies and personal care are appropriate and take place in well-maintained facilities. Pupils move around the building safely and are able to be as independent as possible when using the indoor and outdoor spaces because their needs have been carefully considered. Thorough risk assessments are carried out to ensure that pupils can take part in off-site and residential trips safely. Parents raise no concerns about safety and appreciate the high levels of care and consideration demonstrated by staff. You work closely with other professionals to ensure that pupils get access to any additional services that they need.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders and governors work as a highly effective team and have successfully implemented a programme of continual improvement over a number of years. They share a clear vision for the future of the school and work closely with other professionals and agencies within the borough to ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need. Leaders are now in a strong position to engage more widely with national forums to share their outstanding practice.
- Staff absence is relatively low and pupils benefit from a stable and well-motivated staff team. All staff have access to high-quality training and professional development opportunities. This includes providing opportunities for further career progression and identifying any future leaders. Regular monitoring of teaching by leaders and effective performance management systems help to identify when additional training and support is required. Consequently, teaching standards across the school remain consistently high.
- Pupils respond very well to the established routines and the consistent application of policies and procedures. Pupils with more challenging behaviours are supported well because staff have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of individuals. Staff have completed the required training according to their roles and responsibilities and update this regularly. Pupils settle quickly after joining the school and many start to make rapid progress towards their targets. There have been no exclusions for some years.
- Pupils use a wide variety of communication systems that are appropriate to their needs and skills. Their views and choices are valued and listened to. They are able to practise and improve their skills by working alongside each other and with adults during learning and social times.
- The purpose-built facilities encourage pupils to engage with their learning at every opportunity. Sensory prompts are installed in classrooms, along corridors and at entry and exit points to rooms. Pupils make use of these to move around the building independently.

- Teachers plan creative and engaging activities that help pupils to apply their learning in different ways and encourage them to become more confident. Teachers and support staff work alongside other professionals to constantly assess how much progress pupils are making. This information is shared and collectively evaluated to ensure that every small measure of progress is captured and built on. Targets are regularly reviewed so that all pupils, including those who are most able and those who have very complex learning and health needs, are challenged to reach their full potential.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to address the different needs of all pupils. It includes a wide range of enrichment activities that allow pupils to experience life outside their homes and the school. For example, during the inspection a group of pupils were learning to sail and were away on a residential trip to the south coast.
- Governors have audited their skills to allocate members specific areas of responsibility. This will allow them to make best use of their specialist knowledge and provide stronger support to school leaders. They work closely with you and make regular visits to the school to ensure that they know what is happening. Governors share your determination to ensure that the school remains an outstanding provider and centre of excellence. They are seeking to address the shortfall in the current budget which has been caused by the lower than anticipated number of pupils being referred by the local authority. They ask challenging questions and hold leaders strongly to account for ensuring that the individual needs of pupils are met. However, they are not always able to accurately measure how much impact any agreed interventions or improvements have had. This is because the school's development plan lacks measurable targets and does not identify any monitoring roles for governors to fulfil.
- The local authority provides light touch support through an adviser who knows the school well. The skills of your leadership team and the significant contribution the school makes to supporting pupils from the local area are acknowledged as a valuable asset within the borough. Leaders are working with officers from the local authority to explore how pupil numbers can be boosted further. For example, proposals to offer wider outreach support and short-term assessment placements to pupils from other schools are being considered.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's self-evaluation and development plan includes enough information to allow governors to monitor more precisely how effective any actions have been.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Southwark. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, a representative of the local authority and two governors. Inspectors met with a group of teachers and a group of support staff and considered the four responses to the staff questionnaire. They also spoke to the school nurse and met with a group of parents. The four responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were considered, alongside further evidence of the school's work with parents. Inspectors made short visits to all classes accompanied by senior leaders. Pupils were spoken to informally throughout the inspection during lessons and social times. Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan. They looked at pupils' assessment information and checked the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.