

Jack Taylor School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100093
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	335484
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

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	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Chesters
Headteacher	Stephen Smith
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
School address	Ainsworth Way London NW8 0SR
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed six lessons taught by six different teachers and also visited circle time and snack time. They held meetings with a range of school staff and therapists, governors and local authority officers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation such as assessment data, safeguarding records and the school improvement plan. The five questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were questionnaires completed by staff.

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

- leaders' use of assessment data to measure pupils' progress and to evaluate their learning
- pupils' attendance
- curriculum design and its effectiveness in providing a progressive variety of learning experiences as pupils move through the school
- the use of photographic evidence as an indicator of pupils' achievements, and hence their progress.

Information about the school

The vast majority of pupils are from Camden, although a few from adjoining boroughs are admitted. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs for severe learning difficulties, autism or profound and multiple learning difficulties. A majority of pupils are boys. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and almost three quarters of them are at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language. A similar proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has been accredited with an Artsmark and Sportsmark, and it has acquired Healthy School status. It received recognition for its work with children with autism through the National Autistic Society. The local authority has formally announced that the school will close in 2012, at which time it will merge with another special school and relocate.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and elements of leadership and management. The school also requires significant improvement in relation to its post-16 provision. The school's difficulties stem from overall inadequate leadership and management from school leaders and the governing body.

Despite Jack Taylor School providing a satisfactory education for its pupils, it is not doing as well as it could overall and the provision for post-16 students is inadequate. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, as is the curriculum, but the quality of care, guidance and support is inadequate. While some aspects of safety and welfare are good, the arrangements for registering, recording and tracking safeguarding concerns are inefficient and the procedure is not monitored to ensure that it is working. There is, therefore, the potential for errors to occur and for pupils to be put at risk, although there is no evidence to suggest that this has happened in practice. Pupils' attainment is low because of the severity and complexity of their learning needs. Pupils, including those with the most complex needs and those who are at a very early stage of learning English, make satisfactory progress in their work. Post-16 students do not learn at a fast enough rate. Pupils make good progress in some elements of their personal development, such as how to remain healthy, and they behave well. Attendance, on the other hand, is low.

The school has satisfactory links with parents and carers, has developed adequate partnerships with colleagues from other organisations with which it works, and makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Despite these more encouraging elements, both leadership and management are ineffective. Leadership is failing to set a clear strategic direction that is rooted in a culture of high expectation and which has the backing and confidence of all staff. Management practice is not routine or robust as the systems are not embedded and so leaders do not receive information about the school's performance on a regular, scheduled basis. Monitoring is superficial rather than probing and evaluative. Policy and procedure reviews are 'paper exercises' rather than opportunities to check that practice has a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. Leaders do not show an analytical approach to the data that is collected through school self-evaluation and so they do not necessarily draw the right conclusions. This indicates that the school does not have the capacity for sustained

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improvement, despite having a new Chair of Governors with the drive and skills to get things moving.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish clear, organised procedures for recording safeguarding concerns and evaluate the effectiveness of the relevant policies and practices.
- Make school leaders' and the governing body's leadership and management more effective by
 - embedding a cycle of school self-evaluation that incorporates the views of staff
 - establishing systems for routinely monitoring and evaluating all aspects of provision
 - implementing practice which ensures that policies and procedures are always reviewed for their impact on improving outcomes for pupils
 - analysing data, such as assessment and attendance information, accurately and innovatively and using the outcomes to drive school improvement.
- Provide post-16 students with greater opportunities that meet their learning and personal needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The complex nature of pupils' learning needs means that they make very small gains in progress over time, but nonetheless they learn at a satisfactory pace. Their achievements are satisfactory and pupils get recognition for their efforts at the end of Year 11 through Accreditation for Lifelong Learning. They enjoy being at school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the rate at which they acquire early reading, writing, and information and communication technology skills. For some younger pupils, this may be maintaining eye contact over a period of time, while for others it means using electronic switches successfully to communicate. Pupils build on these early skills as they move through the school. Older pupils, for example, recognise numbers and count successfully up to five. Most pupils have coordination difficulties, but they make good progress in their physical development with the support of occupational therapists and physiotherapists. In some cases, they use a paint brush or scissors with little adult support, and others improve their balance and stamina so that they move around the school and playground safely and unaided.

Pupils show a good understanding of how to remain healthy when they choose healthy food at snack times, and they enjoy physical activities in school time and beyond. There are no incidents of unpleasant behaviour, and so pupils feel safe and they know that they can always turn to an adult if they are upset. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop a growing awareness of the world around them and the quality of their interactions improves. Pupils can make only limited contributions to the community, and they do this satisfactorily insofar as they are able, such as small jobs in the classroom. Not all pupils go to school as often as they should.

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This low attendance rate cannot be accounted for solely by medical appointments, and the school has not been able to identify the reasons for this through its analysis of absences.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good practice. Relationships are good and teaching assistants provide a high level of pastoral support. Pupils learn at a good pace when a variety of communication strategies are used to engage them and when practical activities match their capabilities. On these occasions, pupils have a chance of completing them as independently as possible or with targeted adult support. Expectations are high and time is used efficiently. However, these features of good practice are not always evident in all classes. Some activities are over-directed by adults before pupils have the opportunity to tackle them independently. Adults also sometimes

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.

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reduce the pace of learning by working with groups that are too large and so pupils are kept waiting while time is devoted to an individual.

Pupils receive a satisfactory curriculum. The focus throughout the school is on promoting core skills, such as communication, literacy and language. As pupils move through the secondary phase, this is supplemented with a life skills programme and consideration of the world of work, with some college links available. This extends the curriculum well, as do community-based learning and out-of-school activities, such as trampolining. Delivery and monitoring of the curriculum are significant weaknesses as there is no guarantee that the curriculum is broad and balanced in every class.

Features of care, guidance and support are good. Pupils' personal needs, such as toileting and feeding, are managed well. Pupils benefit greatly from an integrated and consistent programme of therapeutic support that promotes their health and well-being. Staff and regular visitors are checked for their suitability to be with children, and an appropriate single record is retained centrally. However, safeguarding arrangements are inadequate overall. Systems, such as those for managing concerns and/or disclosures, are insecure and not sufficiently robust.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff believe that changes of senior staff and the time devoted to preparatory work for the move in 2012 are the root causes of the current problems. However, the reality is more complex. These events may have exacted a toll, but in reality they were the triggers for more fundamental problems to emerge. Leaders do not receive regular, accurate, detailed information about the school's work. Some operational procedures are poorly implemented. Leaders monitor teachers' planning of what should be taught, but class timetables are poorly constructed and they are neither monitored nor evaluated. Therefore, leaders have no accurate grasp of pupils' actual learning and little idea of the time devoted to different subjects. Other monitoring systems are poorly conceived, such as for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns, or non-existent, such as school leaders' or governing body monitoring of these procedures. Photographic evidence is not used effectively as a secure indicator of pupils' achievements, and leaders do not interrogate assessment data in different ways to try and build up a more comprehensive picture of pupils' progress. There is no indication that school leaders can turn around this situation.

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Leaders care about the children and they demonstrate a satisfactory commitment to equality of opportunity. For example, they recognised that post-16 students were not as well served by the school as other pupils and they have begun to take steps to put this right. In a similar vein, they realise the potential to build on their current satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. They are not, however, as aware of other developments that they need to initiate. Currently, a significant number of staff do not have confidence in leaders and they do not feel that they have any input into the school's evolution. This is because self-audit processes are not all-embracing, nor do they go deep enough. As leaders do not get the full picture, judgements are made without all the facts and do not always provide an accurate view of the school's performance.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Sixth form

Students do not make adequate progress in their work or personal development. Despite following a satisfactory curriculum consisting of key skills, life skills, and an introduction to work/vocational skills, students make slow progress. This is because expectations and activities do not match their individual needs. The level of challenge does not accelerate learning and time is poorly organised and managed. Students receive the same good quality therapeutic input as other pupils. However, their overall care, guidance and support and the leadership and management of the provision suffer from the same inadequate features as the rest of the school.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	4
The quality of provision in the sixth form	4
Leadership and management of the sixth form	4

Views of parents and carers

The very small number of questionnaires that were returned is indicative of the school's difficulty in getting parents and carers to engage with their children's education. Those who did return questionnaires were unanimously positive in their views about the school. However, evidence gathered during the inspection identified significant concerns relating specifically to the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, provision for post-16 students and aspects of leadership and management.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Jack Taylor 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 inspection team received five completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 56 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	4	80	1	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	5	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	4	80	1	20	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	40	2	40	0	0	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)	1	20	4	80	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	60	1	20	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	60	2	40	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Jack Taylor School, London, NW8 0SR

Thank you for being so kind when we visited your school. We enjoyed the time that we spent with you. You behave well and obviously like being at school. We were pleased to see that you choose healthy food and that you know how to stay safe when you move round the school. Some of you go to school nearly every day and that is impressive. Some of you need to go to school more often. You make satisfactory progress in your work.

Lessons are satisfactory and teachers give you satisfactory things to do but your school is not doing as well as it should. The people who run your school are doing some things well, but they need to do other things better. They want to do this and we have asked them to do the following:

- ensure that every one of you is as safe as you can possibly be
- know more about what is going on in the school
- give post-16 students more exciting things to do so that they learn more.

Inspectors will visit your school again soon to check that things are getting better.

Thank you once again and I hope that every one of you will go to school as much as you possibly can.

I wish all of you every success in the future, especially those of you leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell

Lead inspector

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