

Inspection of Talbot House Children's Charity

Hexham Road, Walbottle, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE15 8HW

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for pupils at Talbot House. Pupils experience a rich and varied curriculum. It includes a range of academic subjects with a wide variety of enrichment opportunities. These include computer coding and crafts to develop pupils. Preparing pupils for adulthood is an important part of the school's work. Leaders expect pupils to achieve well. Pupils work towards a variety of qualifications appropriate to their individual needs.

The school supports pupils from key stage 1 to key stage 4. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Pupils are grouped in 'learning zones' around the school. These zones have dedicated facilities and are matched to pupils' key stages and abilities. Pupils learn in mixed-age classes. Some pupils follow a pre-formal or semi-formal curriculum. Other pupils follow a formal curriculum that meets the demands of the national curriculum.

Leaders have developed the school's premises to meet the needs of all pupils. There are well-resourced play areas and well-tended open spaces. Pupils look after the school's animals, including guinea pigs and hamsters, well. Pupils feel safe in school. Bullying is rare. Staff support pupils well if unkind words are said in school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders prioritise reading. All pupils are expected to read using the school's reading programme. Pupils who need support to develop their reading skills learn phonics. Pupils use their phonic knowledge well to read words that are new to them. Staff encourage pupils to read with enthusiasm. Pupils develop a positive attitude towards reading.

Leaders have developed a broad curriculum. It meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Detailed curriculum maps show the progression of knowledge to be learned by pupils in a carefully sequenced order. These maps are adapted across the school's learning zones to meet pupils' individual needs. Learning is frequently revisited to ensure knowledge sticks. Lessons build in complexity. They place more demands on pupils over time. Pupils generally describe their learning well. Teachers bring lessons to life with interesting practical activities. These strategies engage pupils effectively. However, in some learning zones, it is not clear consistently with whom the responsibility for the curriculum lies.

Most pupils behave well. Their behaviour is well managed by assertive staff. Staff and pupils' relationships are respectful and purposeful. Staff follow clear routines and have consistent expectations. This ensures pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards learning. Many pupils' attendance improves since joining the school. Despite receiving transport into school, too many pupils do not attend regularly. Leaders have developed systems to

track pupils' behaviour and absence. These recording systems do not allow for the swift identification of hotspots or patterns in pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Pupils' personal development is a notable strength of the school. It dovetails with a well-thought-out personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils learn about protected characteristics and debate important issues. They learn how to keep themselves healthy. The curriculum includes opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests. These include learning to play the piano or guitar. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge is prioritised. Pupils visit local places of importance and meet people that are different to themselves. They learn about religions across different curriculum areas. These lessons effectively link music to cultures and religions around the world by exploring the origins of musical instruments, for example. Some pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award. Older pupils engage in work experience. They attend careers fairs to prepare them for adulthood well.

Leaders take account of the staff's workload and well-being well. They are approachable and supportive. Leaders develop staff and ensure they have enough time to do their jobs effectively. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) manages support for pupils' SEND needs well. The support includes educational psychology and occupational therapy. School leaders and governors have ambition for pupils. Leaders are supported by a school improvement partner. This ensures they have an accurate view of the school's performance. Governors are strategically involved in school life. They visit the school and check the progress of leaders' improvement plans.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Checks on adults before their employment are comprehensive. Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding across the school. They have developed clear systems and processes to safeguard pupils. These ensure that all staff understand how to raise concerns in relation to pupils' well-being.

Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to keep pupils safe. Records clearly show how staff identify, help with and manage the welfare of pupils. Pupils learn about the risks they may face in the community and while online. They understand ways to keep safe while using technology.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some zones of the school, leaders share responsibility for the development, implementation and oversight of individual subjects across the curriculum. In those zones, it is less clear where the overarching oversight and responsibility for

the curriculum lies. Leaders should ensure there are clearer subject leader responsibilities to ensure stronger oversight of the curriculum.

- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This limits their learning and progress. Leaders should strengthen their approaches with families to promote regular attendance. They should work with parents to overcome any barriers to attendance.
- There is variability in the effectiveness of tracking pupils' behaviour and absence. This means leaders do not have immediate insight of hotspots or patterns. Leaders should ensure staff have access to clear behaviour and absence information to ensure they are able to intervene swiftly and more effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	133779
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10255756
Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Allison Harding
Headteacher	Christine Smiles
Website	www.talbothousecc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Talbot House Children’s Charity is a special school for pupils aged between five and 16 years. It is co-located with Chadersley Children’s Home.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school makes provision for pupils with complex SEND. This includes those with social, emotional and mental health needs, and autism.
- The school is registered to admit post-16 students up to 18 years. No students attend the school in that age group.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school measures itself against the Gatsby Benchmarks to ensure pupils receive high-quality careers advice.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the SENDCo, zone leaders, curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive of the children's charity and members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke with a local authority SEND representative by telephone and met with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, music and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with zone leaders and subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The provision for teaching reading was also scrutinised.
- An inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The inspector reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the lead inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Moira Banks

Ofsted Inspector

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