

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BOWDEN HOUSE SCHOOL**

Seaford

LEA area: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100986

Headteacher: Mr Asif Arif

Lead inspector: Mike Kell

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 July 2005

Inspection number: 268536

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary 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.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
Number on roll:	26
School address:	Firle Road Seaford East Sussex
Postcode:	BN25 2JB
Telephone number:	01323 893138
Fax number:	01323 492057
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Huxted
Date of previous inspection:	7 June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Bowden House School is a day and residential school that is approved for 38 pupils aged 10 to 16 years. There are currently 26 pupils on roll, of whom 23 are boarders. This is much smaller than at the time of the last inspection, when 43 pupils attended the school. Although the school is maintained by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, it is situated in East Sussex. Therefore, the vast majority of pupils come from Tower Hamlets, although a few are placed at the school by the school's neighbouring local education authorities. Although pupils are admitted from such a wide geographical area, overall the school's socio-economic mix is below average.

Almost all pupils have a white British background, and none is learning English as an additional language. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Because of pupils' learning difficulties, their development, especially their attainment on entry to the school, is delayed compared with others of a similar age.

Pupils are evenly distributed between the age groups and they are taught as four classes. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are taught together. A small team of teachers carries out most of their teaching in a detached building referred to as the 'bungalow'. These pupils are taught some subjects in the main school, such as information and communication technology and art and design, by specialist staff. However, at the time of the inspection, for three weeks Year 8 pupils had been incorporated into the main school full-time as a transition stage in preparation for entering Year 9. Year 11 pupils had left school and were not observed.

The school received a Schools Achievement Award in 2001, and School Nutrition Awards in 2003 and 2005. This year, it was recognised as a Healthy School, and also been given a SPEDI (Schools Preventative Education and Drug Intervention) award by the local authority.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13101	Mike Kell	Lead inspector	Science Geography History French
31758	Ted Tipper	Lay inspector	
18261	Tony Hill	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Religious education
3055	Clive Tombs	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Music Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>27</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The effectiveness of Bowden House School is satisfactory.** The headteacher provides strong leadership. Overall, the leadership of other key staff is satisfactory, as are the school's management systems. The quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory; governors are not fulfilling all of their statutory duties and not enough are involved in the work of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The strong leadership of the headteacher is establishing a clear sense of direction for the school.
- Pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, are not challenged sufficiently well.
- The provision in the bungalow for pupils in Years 7 and 8 is effective in developing pupils as learners.
- The length of the planned taught week is too short.
- The school makes very good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of their pupils' attitudes and behaviour are inconsistent.
- Outside the school day, the residential care staff provide very good support for pupils' personal development.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The school has only achieved partial success in addressing the key issues identified at the last inspection. There are now adequate numbers of learning support assistants, and assessment information is being used increasingly, particularly in the bungalow. While statutory requirements are being met in music and art and design, the school is now failing to provide design and technology for pupils in Years 7 – 9. Little has been done to extend opportunities for developing pupils' cultural awareness, and the same unsatisfactory features of the accommodation remain. There has been good improvement in the proportion of teaching and learning that is good or better.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Satisfactory
Year 11	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

Because of the nature of pupils' learning difficulties and their history of absence from school, their attainment on entry to the school, and on leaving it, is below the level expected of pupils of similar ages. **Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall**, although they achieve well in Years 7 – 9. Pupils in the bungalow achieve consistently well because the challenging activities they are given are planned on the basis of detailed assessment information that teachers hold. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' achievements are limited by some lack of challenge, which is associated with teachers' insufficiently high expectations. Pupils' immature attitudes frequently inhibit their own and others' achievements, and a relatively short taught week limits their achievements over time. Pupils achieve well in speaking and reading, and satisfactorily in writing and developing listening skills. Their achievements in mathematics are satisfactory, and good in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE).

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are also satisfactory. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.**

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The school provides a satisfactory quality education** for its pupils. **Teaching and learning are satisfactory** overall, but good in Years 7 –9 and consistently so in the bungalow, where pupils are provided with activities that match their capabilities and encourage and enable them to try and work independently. In the vast majority of classes, teachers and learning support assistants work effectively as teams; they support and encourage pupils well and have very good relationships with them. Some adults' inconsistent pupil management means that on many occasions pupils' attitudes and behaviour interfere with their learning. Teachers' use of homework to reinforce learning is unsatisfactory.

Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The bungalow provision has some good features, and enables pupils who have lost a lot of schooling to make a smooth transition from primary to secondary education. However, the overall curriculum for pupils in Years 7 – 9 is unsatisfactory because the school fails to meet statutory requirements for design and technology and the length of the taught week falls some way short of the recommended time. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are satisfactory. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but there are some inadequate features, such as the library.

The school makes very good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It provides pupils with good support, advice and guidance, and actively seeks and values their views.

The school has developed a good relationship with pupils' parents and carers. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher has shown a clear sense of purpose and direction in developing the school. Generally, senior staff are good role models and have created effective teams. Good financial planning and management support the school's effective strategic planning. Governance is unsatisfactory overall; governors do not fulfil all of their statutory duties, and they are not sufficiently well involved in developing the school and monitoring its work.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. They fully support the school's aims and are appreciative of what the school is doing for their children. Pupils are satisfied with the school and enthusiastic in their approach to the activities provided outside the classroom.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Use homework and more challenging targets to increase the expectations of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Extend the length of the planned taught week to bring it into line with recommendations.
- Introduce explicit guidelines on expectations of pupils' behaviour, and ensure that all staff adhere to them and allocate pupils' points consistently and appropriately.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide design and technology for pupils in Years 7 – 9 and produce a Governors' Annual Report to Parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Overall, pupils' academic achievements are satisfactory although pupils in Years 7 – 9 achieve well. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in their personal and social development. Because of the nature of pupils' learning difficulties and their history of absence from school, their attainment on entry to the school, and on leaving it, is below the level expected of pupils of similar ages.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in the bungalow achieve as well as they can.
- In Years 10 and 11, there is an absence of challenge associated with teachers' insufficiently high expectations.
- All pupils' good achievements in some subjects are linked to consistently good teaching.
- Pupils' immature attitudes frequently inhibit their own and others' achievements.
- A relatively short taught week limits pupils' achievements over time.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are based in the bungalow, and they achieve well. The arrangement to teach them in a base classroom by a very small team of teachers, supported by some specialist teachers in the main school works effectively. The base team focuses very much on developing pupils' learning skills, and pupils are able to transfer these when they are taught elsewhere. Consequently, this age group generally learns well because the challenging activities that are provided have been planned on the basis of detailed assessment information that teachers hold. Very few pupils enter the school at the beginning of Year 7, and so it is difficult to judge the value that the school adds in preparation for pupils taking standardised attainment tests at the end of Year 9. The limited evidence available from these test results shows that pupils make good progress; since 2002 an increasing per cent has obtained Levels 4 and 5.
2. The achievements of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are sometimes limited by a lack of expectation. The grades predicted for them in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and Certificate of Educational Achievement (Entry Level) examinations that they take do not represent sufficient challenge. On the basis of their results in the standardised attainment tests they took at the end of Year 9, expectations of their performance in accredited examinations are not high enough. This lack of challenge is particularly evident in the school's attitude toward homework. There is no requirement that homework should be set. This means that the opportunity for pupils to consolidate and extend their learning outside the school day is missed, and this impacts on their achievements. Homework is not set for any year group, but the impact is greatest in Years 10 and 11 as pupils prepare for examinations.
3. Pupils of all ages achieve consistently well in some subjects, such as art and design and PSHE, and in some components of subjects, like speaking and reading in English. These good achievements are linked to consistently good teaching that is characterised by interesting activities and efficient pupil management. Consequently, pupils spend most of the lesson time working on the tasks they are given because they find them interesting and they know the teachers' expectations of their behaviour.
4. The school's leaders have implemented a number of strategies to try and improve pupils' behaviour, but they have not yet developed practical whole-school guidelines to which teachers can refer when faced with pupils who want to wear baseball caps in lessons, or who wish to leave the lesson to go to the toilet very soon after a break. Consequently, this often



leads to conflict in lessons as the attitude of a significant number of pupils becomes a barrier to their own achievements, and on too many occasions this develops into behaviour that has an adverse effect on the achievements of their classmates. The school writes many personal and social targets for pupils in many formats. In fact, there are too many and they are dispersed among too many documents and so they are not referred to routinely in teachers' planning. Consequently, pupils' achievements in relation to their individual personal and social targets are no better satisfactory.

5. The planned and taught school week is too short. It is significantly below the recommended times for these age groups. Such a reduced timetable inevitably reduces the potential for all pupils to achieve over time as well as they are capable.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work and others in the school are satisfactory, as is their attendance and punctuality. Their personal development through the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has good procedures to improve attendance, but parents do not always support them.
- The effectiveness of the school's many strategies to promote good behaviour is limited by the inconsistency of staff's expectations.
- Pupils are enthusiastic in their approach to the activities provided outside the classroom.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are good.

### **Commentary**

6. The attendance figures below, for 2003-4, show a decline since the last inspection, but the small number of pupils on roll means that the very poor attendance of one or two pupils has a disproportionate effect on the overall figure. In the current year, attendance has risen and is now in line with national figures because unauthorised absence has been reduced. This reflects the strenuous efforts of the school's education social worker in working with pupils and their families to emphasise the importance of good attendance. However, she has to overcome a certain resistance or lack of interest by some families and her task is made much more difficult by the distance of pupils' homes from the school.

### **Attendance**

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	15.0	School data	9.0
National data	10.5	National data	8.7

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

7. The school's success in improving pupils' behaviour is evident in the very significant reduction in the number of exclusions since the last inspection, but it is not as effective as it might be because of inconsistency in staff's application of the procedures. Behaviour management is based on the school's 'Three Golden Rules', which focus on the use of acceptable language, appropriate interactions with classmates and punctuality and effort in lessons. Pupils are fully aware of the range of rewards and sanctions, which can be given on an individual or group basis, to uphold these rules. Pupils' success, or otherwise, in sticking to the rules in lessons is reflected in the points they are awarded at the end of each session. However, there is

inconsistency in staff's expectations of behaviour and attitudes and in the way different staff members allocate the points, with some much less strict than others. This sends out a mixed message to the pupils; what is not accepted in one lesson, such as wearing a baseball cap or swearing, is not addressed in another and pupils receive points that they do not deserve because some staff do not want conflict.

8. Behaviour in communal sessions, such as meal breaks and assemblies is normally good. However, around the school pupils' lack of self-control and tolerance can lead to flash points between them. These are usually resolved fairly quickly, with little long-lasting malice evident. Anger is rarely directed specifically at staff, who are very good at defusing potentially explosive situations. The school addresses bullying in a very open way, and this ensures that most pupils and parents are happy that any instances are resolved appropriately.

## Exclusions

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	23	4	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

9. Pupils look forward to the many activities that take place during lunchtimes and after school. These include playing various sports as well as musical and artistic activities. There are regular trips in the evenings for boarding pupils, and these are very popular; pupils respond to them eagerly. However, most do not approach lessons with the same enthusiasm and many require constant encouragement to maintain their concentration. They are also reluctant to return to class at the end of break-times.
10. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily through assemblies and acts of collective worship. Staff work tirelessly, but only partially successfully, to encourage pupils to develop the social skills needed to interact with others and to build long-term relationships. Lunchtime is particularly good in this respect; pupils, staff and visitors sit and eat together in a very relaxed atmosphere and discuss a wide range of topics. This builds pupils' confidence to the extent that most are able to talk willingly and openly with visitors and they normally relate well with each other. During the school day and in the evenings the teaching and care staff work very much as a team to establish trusting relationships with the pupils. The school works hard to instil in its pupils the importance of right and wrong and how to respect the feelings and beliefs of others. Some subjects, like music and art and design, develop pupils' multi-cultural development well but overall the school gives pupils limited exposure to their own and others' cultures. In particular, more could be done to prepare them for life in a multi-racial society.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching, learning and assessment procedures are satisfactory, but the overall curriculum is unsatisfactory. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment. Pupils' learning is supported by good links with parents and satisfactory partnerships with other schools and the community. The school looks after its pupils very well.

## Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are satisfactory procedures in place for assessing pupils' achievements.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 7 - 9 are taught well.
- Adults' inconsistent pupil management means that on many occasions pupils' attitudes and behaviour interfere with their learning.
- Teachers and learning support assistants work effectively as teams; they support and encourage pupils well and have very good relationships with them.
- The school does not use homework to reinforce learning.

### Commentary

11. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, there are differences in the quality of teaching between the age groups. Two thirds of teaching in lessons involving pupils in Years 7 – 9 is good or better, whereas the comparative figure in Year 10 is half. No Year 11 lessons were seen. The main reason for this difference is the quality of provision in the bungalow. The pupils based there learn effectively. A small team of teachers know the pupils and their needs extremely well. Pupils' achievements are assessed and recorded routinely and accurately and, therefore, teachers plan future lessons based on a secure understanding of the pupils' prior learning. Consequently, they provide activities that match pupils' capabilities and encourage and enable them to try and work independently. At the time of the inspection, Year 8 pupils were in the early stages of the transition into the main school in preparation for entering Year 9 and were, therefore, being taught by teachers new to them. However, it was apparent that the time spent in the bungalow had developed them as learners. The less effective learning that often took place in Year 10 lessons resulted mainly from the pupils' immature attitude towards learning and teachers' responses to it.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	7 (26%)	10 (37%)	9 (33%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

12. Teachers' management of their pupils is variable. Some manage them very effectively. On these occasions, teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are made explicit and so time is used efficiently as little is wasted through lengthy ongoing negotiations with pupils as to what is expected of them. At other times, teachers are not sufficiently assertive in explaining and maintaining their expectations. In part, this is because there are no clear and unambiguous whole school guidelines about such issues as whether pupils should be allowed to wear baseball caps in lessons and whether they should be allowed to go to the toilet, often just after a break. In addition, some teachers hand out sweets at various times in lessons, which is not appropriate for pupils of this age. In isolation, these are relatively minor issues but they frequently cause great disruption in lessons because teachers react to them differently. A similar situation occurs when teachers expect pupils to write; some are almost apologetic about making such a request and this, once again, is because this is a demand not made by all teachers on a regular basis. Whatever the trigger, in too many instances the disruption caused by some pupils' immature behaviour and attitudes disturbs the learning of themselves and others.

13. Lessons have generous staffing levels. Close liaison between teachers and support staff, including residential care staff, means that all adults know of any circumstances that may have an adverse effect on pupils' learning. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subjects they teach, and support staff support them effectively; they work well together as class-based teams. Throughout lessons, pupils are encouraged constantly and prompted to engage in the activities. Learning support staff have a particular input into pupil management when individual pupils' reluctance or refusal to participate looks likely to disturb the lesson. In many instances, this means taking them from the classroom to continue their work elsewhere.
14. Teachers use homework unsatisfactorily as a means of extending pupils' learning and as an opportunity to rehearse previously learned skills. This is a shortcoming at a whole school level rather than at the level of individual teachers, and it reflects an aspect of school leadership and management that needs to be addressed. There is no whole school expectation that homework should be set, and this is a missed opportunity to deploy care staff to support pupils' learning in the residential setting. The absence of homework also reduces significantly the involvement parents can have in their children's learning by supporting them at home at weekends.
15. The school's assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, but good in the bungalow. The achievements of pupils in Years 7 and 8 are measured against National Curriculum attainment levels each half term, and these are substantiated by ongoing marking and notes that record what pupils have learned. A similar system is being introduced into some subjects, such as science, beyond Year 8 but this is not yet uniform across the school. Generally, assessment systems are inconsistent. Senior managers try to track pupils' achievements over time, but this is difficult due to their age when they enter the school. For instance, of the 26 pupils currently in school, only seven were on roll before September 2004.

## **The curriculum**

Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are satisfactory, as are the accommodation and learning resources.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school fails to meet all statutory requirements for pupils in Years 7 – 9.
- The bungalow provision has a good, well-planned curriculum; pupils are prepared well for their transfer into the main school.
- The length of the planned taught week falls some way short of the recommended time.
- There is good provision for PSHE.
- There are some opportunities for extending learning outside the school day, but these are not fully exploited.

### **Commentary**

16. The school does not provide pupils in Years 7 – 9 with the full National Curriculum, as there is no planned programme for design and technology. Pupils in the bungalow experience some elements of this subject, such as making sandwiches to reinforce the idea of sequencing and following a series of instructions, but generally there is not a taught curriculum.
17. Some aspects of the curriculum have developed well since the previous inspection. There is now an improved programme of literacy support across the curriculum, extending into the residential provision, and information and communication technology (ICT) provision has improved considerably, with teachers and many pupils more confident in its use. A particularly innovative development has been the establishment of the bungalow, which provides an adapted curriculum that is based on the primary school model. Most teaching is carried out in the base classroom by a very small team of teachers, but specialist staff teach

other subjects, such as music and art and design. This well-planned provision enables pupils who have lost a lot of schooling to make a smooth transition from primary to secondary education.

18. Although the bungalow provision has some strengths, the curriculum overall for pupils in Years 7 – 9 is unsatisfactory because of the statutory breach of requirements, the organisation of the timetable and the length of the taught week. The timetable shows a taught week of 23 hours, which is below the recommendation for this age group, but in practice pupils do not receive even this amount of planned teaching. The 20 minutes tutorial session held Monday to Thursday is not planned. It is intended to have a literacy focus, but this is not always the case, and even when it does the activities provided do not form part of an overall planned programme. Each Wednesday afternoon, pupils choose from a range of sporting and other activities, but this session lacks planning and focus. Managers do not consider the implications of pupils' choices in terms of the overall curriculum they receive. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. While there are some common shortcomings, such as the length of the taught week, there are no statutory breaches and these pupils' curriculum is enhanced by the work-related learning provision. All pupils benefit from good PSHE provision, and the school's success in delivering its drugs, alcohol and tobacco education programme has been recognised through the receipt of a SPEDI (Schools Preventative Education and Drug Intervention) award by the local authority.
19. There are satisfactory links with other special schools through sporting competitions, and pupils are able to join local clubs and to use the leisure centre and town facilities to develop their social skills and independence away from school. In the residential area they learn to cook and to manage their personal lives in preparation for leaving school. Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and other outdoor pursuits add to the richness of additional curriculum opportunities. However, most of these activities are geared towards supporting pupils' personal development. Support for their learning outside the school day is much less effective. Pupils have many opportunities to attend school clubs that interest them, but there is as yet no effective link for the residential provision to support class-based learning. Homework is seen as optional, and this is a missed opportunity to use residential care staff to consolidate pupils' learning.
20. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, but there are some unsatisfactory features. The library, although improved since the previous inspection, remains small, poorly furnished and insufficiently resourced for reference purposes, and is mainly used for individual withdrawal lessons. The internal physical education accommodation is inadequate, the art room is in a poor decorative state and many rooms lack good quality, appropriate furnishing.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school makes very good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It provides pupils with good support, advice and guidance, and actively seeks and values the views of pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is very successful in providing personal support, advice and guidance for its pupils; relationships are very good.
- The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle for its pupils.
- Very good arrangements exist for pupils joining the school.
- Pupil surveys and the School Council enable pupils to become actively involved in influencing the life of the school.

## Commentary

21. Inspectors from the Commission for Social Care Inspections (CSCI) visited the residential provision in November 2004. Inspectors endorse the overall very positive findings contained in their report.
22. Care and teaching staff work very closely with each other to ensure each pupil is supported in a consistent way in both school and the residential provision. The effectiveness of the support they provide is enhanced greatly by the staff deployment arrangements that see care staff working alongside teachers in the classroom. This is clearly very successful and much appreciated by the pupils.
23. Teaching and residential care staff contribute to good records that are maintained on the behavioural, emotional and social development of pupils. These are shared and enable all staff to track pupils' personal development during their life in the school. This is a particularly effective feature of the school and residential provision partnership. Outside the school day, the residential care staff continue to provide very good support for pupils' personal development. Residential pupils also have access to an independent visitor who provides an opportunity for them to receive impartial help and advice. Although staff sometimes work with some pupils in the evenings, for instance in helping them with reading, this tends to be on an ad hoc basis. However, the lack of regular homework means they can make only a very limited contribution to supporting pupils' learning out of school. Limitations in the school's systems for assessing pupils' academic achievements mean that their academic progress is not tracked as effectively as their personal development, except in the bungalow. Year 7 and 8 pupils' achievements are assessed and recorded well.
24. The school treats the health and safety of its pupils as a major priority. The caretaker and a senior member of staff carry out an audit of the buildings and grounds on a fortnightly basis, with any corrective action required immediately scheduled. There are detailed risk assessments for all outside trips and for some teaching and residential areas, such as the laboratory and washrooms. Child protection procedures are fully established, and all members of staff are suitably trained. There is an appropriate number of staff who have had First Aid training, and an effective system for administering medicines is in place. There is a strong focus on showing pupils the importance of a healthy lifestyle through educating them about healthy eating and drinking and providing them with opportunities for physical activity during and after the school day. As a result, the school has received the Healthy School and School Nutrition Awards. School meals are exceptional in terms of the quality and quantity provided; they are made almost exclusively with fresh ingredients and contain generous supplies of fruit and vegetables. Most pupils thrive on this diet of natural foodstuffs.
25. Most parents are very appreciative of the efforts made to introduce their children into the school. The school's education social worker visits prospective pupils' homes to brief them and their parents and to provide them with a very informative parental information booklet and student handbook. This is followed by a lengthy visit to the school, and those pupils who decide they would like to join are then given the opportunity to stay for a few days to confirm they have made the right choice.
26. There are good procedures for seeking the views of pupils and allowing them to express choice, and most pupils feel their views are valued. For instance, they are fully involved in discussions about evening activities. The school also uses more formal procedures. There is an annual survey of pupils' views, and there have been specific ones about issues such as bullying. Pupils' views are treated seriously and changes are made in response, such as the cycle track that pupils helped to design. The school council consists of a representative from each year group and it meets regularly to discuss aspects of school life that concern pupils.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has developed a good relationship with pupils' parents and carers. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors fail to provide parents with an annual report.
- Parents are provided with a very high standard of information about the school and their children's achievements.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The use of links with the local community to enrich pupils' learning is under-developed.

### **Commentary**

27. The governing body is failing in its statutory responsibility to produce a Governors' Annual Report to Parents.
28. Information produced by the school is of very high standard. The school prospectus is of a very high quality in terms of its content and presentation. It is well supported by a range of booklets on topics such as Individual Education Plans, Year 9 transition planning and procedures for their children's Annual Review of their Statement of Special Educational Need. The school has many other very effective communication systems for providing parents who live a very long way away with information about the school generally and their children specifically. Weekly newsletters are posted home, along with pupils' achievement cards for the previous week and the current privilege list that identifies those who are achieving and behaving well. In addition, teaching or care staff contact parents weekly to celebrate successes and share concerns. Home visits by the school's education social worker, at least twice a year, enable personal contact to be maintained. The report submitted to the Annual Review of pupils' Statement of Special Educational Need provides information on attainment levels in all National Curriculum subjects and celebrates pupils' achievements. However, some subject reports do not always say enough about what is needed to improve pupils' performance or show specific targets.
29. As the majority of parents live such a long distance away, it is impracticable for them to take an active part in the daily life of the school. However, the high number of returns of the pre-inspection questionnaire, most of which were positive in their views about the school, indicates the support parents have for the school in what it is doing for their children. Many attend school events, such as the annual open day that allows them to spend time in the school and join with pupils and staff in a range of activities. However, the school could be more active in involving parents in their children's learning by providing the pupils with homework and giving parents information on how they can support this at home.
30. The school could do more to involve itself with the local community. Pupils are members of local organisations, such as youth and football clubs, and make good use of local facilities like the leisure centre and swimming pool. There are close links with the police school liaison officer, who runs sessions on topics such as drugs awareness and helps the school co-exist with its adjacent residential neighbours. Relationships with these are generally fine, but the school does little to encourage them to come into the school and appreciate what goes on there. Some visitors come into school, such as a practitioner providing reflexology and Indian head massage to help to ease pupils' tensions but, for instance, contacts with local churches and their ministers are rare. There are some useful commercial links through the education business partnership (EBP), which lead to some work experience placements. No appointed governors come from the local area. This reduces the impact governors have in facilitating and developing community links.

31. The school's ability to forge effective partnerships with other schools and colleges is hindered significantly by its location within another local authority, and its organisation as a residential school. For instance, for organisational reasons pupils who attend colleges local to their homes can only follow courses that take place on a Monday or Friday. On the other hand, the link courses available in colleges local to the school take place on Fridays but the school finishes at lunchtime on this day and so pupils cannot attend for the whole day. This limits pupils' opportunities to experience a range of vocational options. As a consequence, there is no vocational accreditation available for school leavers.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides strong leadership. The effectiveness of leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Management systems are satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory, and governors do not fulfil all of their statutory duties.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose.
- Good financial planning and management support the school's effective strategic planning.
- Overall, governors are not sufficiently well involved in developing the school and monitoring its work.
- Senior staff are good role models and have created effective teams.

### **Commentary**

32. Governors are failing to ensure that the school complies with all statutory requirements. There is no planned design and technology curriculum available for pupils in Years 7 – 9, and the governing body does not produce a Governors' Annual Report to Parents.
33. Overall, the headteacher has provided good leadership since his appointment in 2003. The school had been through a difficult period prior to then; the number on roll had dropped significantly, pupils' achievements had declined and management systems had slipped. He needed to make major changes and in a relatively short time. First, he stabilised the situation and then set a clear direction for the school's continuing development, which included the need to raise expectations. The local authority's target intervention group that was established at the request of the chair of governors and headteacher has supported the headteacher well in this; it includes officers, school staff and governors and meets regularly to monitor progress. Elements of very good leadership are evident in the establishment of the bungalow provision, the extended breadth of accreditation available at the end of Year 11, staff recruitment and deployment and the admission of pupils from adjoining local authorities. However, other features of the school still require clear leadership in order to improve. These include issues such as homework, adults' expectations of pupils' behaviour and its management, and the use of curriculum time. All members of the leadership team need to contribute to addressing these issues. Currently, some key members of staff have supported the recent evolution of the school actively and enthusiastically through the ideas they have contributed, but others are not yet having enough impact on shaping the school's future.
34. Day-to-day financial matters are well managed by the school administration officer, and effective and comprehensive reports are produced regularly for governors and the local authority. There are strong links between budgeting and the school's priority development areas that have been established through its self-evaluation systems. Consequently, governors and the management team are able to develop their strategic plans confident in the knowledge that they can be funded appropriately. The annual surpluses are very large, but they are also planned and much of the proposed spending involves maintaining, refurbishing and improving an ageing building. Funds are accrued for specific projects in both the



residential and teaching areas, and represent an appropriate mixture of short-term activities and longer-term projects. Consequently, both current and prospective pupils benefit from the improvements resulting from this expenditure.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,422,530	Balance from previous year	362,881
Total expenditure	1,553,362	Balance carried forward to the next	232,049
Expenditure per pupil	59,744		

35. The school receives very little support from the governing body as a whole. All appointed and co-opted governors live in the Tower Hamlets area and, therefore, very few ever visit the school other than for governors' meetings. They rarely get first-hand information about the school and this limits the extent to which they can play the role of 'critical friend'. The chair and vice-chair are the exceptions. They have much more regular and direct contact with the school and are significantly better informed about its strengths and weaknesses. This means they are able to question and challenge proposals made by the management team.
36. Senior staff try hard, and generally successfully to provide good role models to staff and pupils. They show a strong commitment to meeting individual pupils' needs, and much time is spent in conversation with pupils listening to their views and explaining the features of their behaviour that are unacceptable. Team leaders in the residential provision have developed effective staff groups, and the domestic bursar's team is very committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for the pupils. There is now much closer liaison between these different teams, and in many ways this leads to a much more co-ordinated approach to meeting the pupils' many needs. Full effectiveness is being limited by staff uncertainty about expectations, or by their inconsistency in applying them. As a group, senior managers have not been sufficiently explicit in stating their expectations, such as the issue concerning the wearing of baseball caps, and ensuring that their colleagues implement these decisions.

## WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work experience is well organised and extends pupils' understanding of work.
- There is a well-established careers education and guidance programme in Years 9 - 11.
- Pupils do not have the opportunity to participate in mini-enterprise activities.
- The structure of the school week limits pupils' attendance at colleges and the opportunity to follow vocational courses.

### Commentary

37. A learning support assistant fulfils the role of work experience co-ordinator. She carefully seeks out appropriate placements based on pupils' individual learning needs and interests. This is done mainly with friendly and supportive local employers, but tends to be on a one-day per week basis rather than in blocks. The co-ordinator makes regular visits to pupils on placements, monitors their progress and involves them in evaluating its value and quality. The learning gained from this experience contributes well to pupils' career planning.

38. Careers education and guidance are good. There are well-established links with the Connexions service for pupils in Years 9 – 11. A Connexions personal adviser attends all transitional reviews of pupils' Statement of Special Educational Need and continues to give support and advice from this point onwards. While there is currently no team enterprise programme, which is an area for development, Year 9 and 10 pupils take part in the *Construction Challenge* and are involved in self-help work improving the school environment. In this way, they make a positive contribution to the school community. Pupils' awareness, knowledge and understanding of the world of work are promoted by visits to such places as British Airways at Heathrow, and through links with the local EBP. Business mentors carry out mock interviews and pupils attend courses such as '*Getting Ahead*', organised by the EBP.
39. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from attendance on college courses. This experience contributes to their personal and social development, particularly in terms of self-confidence and independence. Year 11 pupils attend colleges near to their homes, and those in Year 10 go to colleges local to the school. However, the potential of both arrangements to develop pupils' vocational experience and the opportunity to gain accreditation is restricted by the location of the school and its organisation.
40. The co-ordination of WRL is satisfactory, with satisfactory arrangements in place for evaluating and developing it further. The WRL programme is beginning to make a strong contribution to preparing pupils for leaving school by developing in them social and economic awareness. The school's success in preparing pupils for the opportunities available to them after school is evident in the fact that all the four pupils who have just left have places on full-time college courses.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

41. In the only lesson sampled in **French**, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory. Despite the teacher's best efforts, the pupils were determined to obstruct learning. Appropriately, the teacher had planned a lesson that focused on developing spoken French, but with vocabulary acquisition supported by text. Direct teaching and games, such as 'pairs' during which pupils had to match digits with the written form of the number, had been well chosen to reinforce pupils' knowledge of French numbers. However, pupils lacked interest and their attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory. On the rare occasions when pupils became involved in the lesson, such as a game of '*Simon Says*', many showed a good understanding of the relevant vocabulary.

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in speaking and reading.
- English lessons are well planned and taught with enthusiasm and commitment.
- The subject is well managed and led by the joint co-ordinators, who work well together.
- The library is an unsatisfactory facility for learning.

#### **Commentary**

42. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, although their achievements are different in the different components of the subject; these are speaking and listening, reading and writing. All pupils go on to take either GCSE or Entry Level at the end of Year 11, with the majority of pupils being successful. However, the target grades set for these examinations are not always sufficiently challenging. In addition, expectation is not supported by sufficient focus on learning outside the school day. Approximately half the pupils follow the Reading Challenge scheme that is supported well in the evenings by residential care staff, but homework is not set, even in Years 10 and 11.
43. Pupils' achievements in speaking are good, with many opportunities provided for them to develop these skills. For instance, assemblies, lunchtimes and meetings encourage this, and there are many opportunities for them to engage in discussion in lessons and in residential time. Pupils' emotional and behavioural difficulties often impede the development of this skill, but pupils are capable of demonstrating thoughtfulness, self-awareness and interest when they make their best efforts to communicate with others. For instance, pupils enjoy drama lessons and they learn to modulate their voices to suit the character in role-plays. This raises their confidence and self-esteem, but sometimes lessons lack the disciplined ethos that is required and so pupils' immaturity gets in the way of learning. While listening skills are generally encouraged, they are not so well developed. Pupils often lack the self-discipline to enable them to listen attentively and respectfully to others, particularly when teachers have management difficulties, and there are insufficient planned strategies available to enable teachers to develop this skill.
44. Achievement in reading is good. Pupils enter the school with low reading levels, which impedes their learning in all subjects, and so the development of this is given high priority. Standardised reading tests are used effectively and regularly to evaluate the progress that pupils make, and these records show that many make rapid and impressive gains in their reading competence. The opportunities for pupils to read in front of their class and in

assemblies have been key factors in increasing their self-confidence and raising their self-esteem. In addition, the Tower Hamlets Reading Challenge has been successfully introduced by the subject co-ordinators. While residential care staff support this scheme, the co-ordinator recognises the need to develop monitoring systems to evaluate what value is being added by their support.

45. Most pupils are very reluctant to write and this inhibits their achievements despite teachers' best efforts. Pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory. Pupils in the bungalow are taught the basics of writing and spelling, supported by the use of regular spelling tests, and they make good progress in developing a cursive script. They learn to write for a range of audiences and purposes, but their resistance to writing is very strong and progress is limited. The literacy strategy for pupils in 7 – 9 is not used to full effect, and insufficient demands are made on pupils to write in other subjects.
46. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers work hard to develop literacy skills in pupils who have become accustomed to frustration and failure in previous schools. They have a very good command of their subject and high expectations of good behaviour and work. Consequently, lessons are usually calm and pupils industrious. Lessons are carefully planned, and ICT is used effectively to engage pupils and to encourage them to work hard. Drama lessons and sessions that focus on literature are used well to widen pupils' interest in literature and to develop their skills in analysing texts critically. Pupils' work shows some good examples of sensitive responses to the literature studied.
47. The subject is well led and managed by two well-informed and enthusiastic subject leaders who are committed to raising pupils' achievements across the school. For instance, they are looking to re-introduce the English literature GCSE examination to go alongside the English language paper. They are very good role models for both teachers and pupils. The library accommodation is unsatisfactory and the stock of books is inadequate. They are not displayed attractively and many of them are old.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

48. Language and literacy are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. There is good promotion of specialist vocabulary in most subjects, and many rooms have displays that support this. However, in too many subjects pupils are not required to write routinely, such as in art and design where there is no requirement to annotate work and make notes on artists and their work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Up to the end of Year 9, pupils' learning is good and they achieve well.
- The lack of a specialist mathematics co-ordinator limits the effectiveness of the subject.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance learning.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils in Years 10 and 11 sometimes disrupt learning.

### **Commentary**

49. Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory but they are good in Years 7 – 9. This is because they are regularly challenged and have better attitudes towards their learning. Their successful learning is evident in the improving grades that pupils achieve in the national standardised tests that they take at the end of Year 9. Pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory. They follow accredited courses, such as GCSE and Entry Level, but there is a lack of challenge in the grade predictions made for them based on the levels they attained

in the national standardised tests taken at the end of Year 9. In addition, homework, which should consolidate and extend learning, is a voluntary activity and is not taken sufficiently seriously. On occasions, teaching for this age group is also less effective and pupils' behaviour disrupts learning too frequently.

50. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good, but is satisfactory overall. The best teaching takes place in the bungalow; lessons are well planned with clear indications of what it is intended pupils will learn and good use is made of ICT to enhance the subject. Activities are suitably matched to pupils' different needs and very good help and encouragement from support teachers ensure that everyone is included and successful. Skilful questioning is used to good effect to focus pupils' attention and to maintain a good pace, and appropriate mathematical vocabulary is reinforced throughout. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are generally good in Years 7 and 8. Pupils engage in set tasks, are generally co-operative and motivated and try hard to do well. They are managed effectively and points are awarded during the lesson to pupils who are correctly following the school classroom rules, being recorded on the whiteboard for all to see. At the end of lessons, points are determined in a way that fairly reflects pupils' behaviour.
51. In less successful lessons a number of inconsistencies undermine the quality of learning. Pupils in Years 9 - 11 occasionally come late to lessons. They find it difficult to sustain appropriate classroom behaviour and language, and struggle to maintain their concentration for the length of a lesson. They lack confidence in their own ability and are easily discouraged. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is variable and so frequently pupils are either sent from the room or opt to go to the quiet room. No references are made to pupils' numeracy targets in their IEPs, and too little time is given at the end of lessons to review learning. Pupils' work is marked, but it often lacks evaluative comment on how they might improve.
52. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because the current co-ordinator is neither a subject specialist nor a permanent member of staff. The subject provision is being limited by the absence of a specialist with the knowledge, ambition, skill and enthusiasm to lead and co-ordinate it and to address the current inconsistencies and disseminate best practice. There has been satisfactory improvement in the quality of provision since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Teachers in other subjects reinforce mathematical understanding satisfactorily. There are good examples of numeracy skills being rehearsed, such as in history to calculate the length of a king's reign, data handling in science, counting in music, and probability in ICT. However, these opportunities do not yet feature routinely in all teachers' planning.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good emphasis on investigative work
- Appropriate scientific vocabulary is used effectively.
- Activities tend to be too over-directed by the teacher.
- Time is not used efficiently on many occasions.
- Resources and accommodation are good.

## **Commentary**

54. The fact that pupils can now take an Entry Level examination course at the end of Year 11 represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. In addition, facilities for the subject have improved noticeably. A well-designed conversion has produced a good science laboratory, which is equipped with a good range and quality of resources, which now also includes a small fume cupboard.
55. Overall, there has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is carried out by knowledgeable teachers and, therefore, they use questions effectively to tease out pupils' understanding of scientific ideas and their knowledge of living things, different materials and physical processes. During these oral sessions, teachers use scientific language well and there is strong encouragement for pupils to do likewise.
56. Teachers also plan to ensure that the subject curriculum encourages an appropriate emphasis on investigative science. However, this is not always done in ways that encourage pupils to find out things for themselves because on too many occasions teachers carry out demonstrations, with pupils contributing or assisting little. There is much less focus on discussing with pupils the focus of experimental work, providing them with the materials and enabling them to carry out the work independently or collaboratively. Lessons are planned appropriately, with an introduction followed by a main teaching session and a final plenary. However, the times given to these different parts of the lesson are not balanced. In particular, introductory sessions are much too long and eat into the time available for the main learning activity. Generally, these are revision periods, in the form of tests, to reinforce prior learning but on too many occasions they include questions to topics that have not been adequately covered before, which then requires new teaching before pupils can answer the question. The net result is that the sessions go on far too long and so pupils become increasingly bored and their attitudes and behaviour deteriorate.
57. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. There has been a steady increase over the last three years in the per cent of pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5 in the standardised attainment tests that pupils take at the end of Year 9, but it is difficult to judge the impact that the school has had because it is very rare for pupils to be on roll for the all of Years 7 – 9. In addition, pupil numbers are so small that just one or two pupils can influence these per cents. While pupils can now go on to follow an accredited course in Years 10 and 11, the target grades predicted for them are not always challenging enough.
58. The two co-ordinators lead and manage the subject satisfactorily. They have developed a broad curriculum, and the good assessment system developed for Years 7 and 8 is now being adopted in Years 9 – 11. They have identified appropriate development areas, such as the possible introduction of a GCSE course, but there has been limited monitoring of each other's work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

59. An insufficient number of lessons were seen for judgements to be made on teaching and learning, pupils' achievements and overall provision.
60. The subject has been through a very difficult and disruptive period that has slowed its development, and the temporary co-ordinator has had little time to develop detailed planning. However, he is very secure in his knowledge and understanding of ICT and has been able to advise and support other teachers in their use of interactive whiteboards and computers. As a result, the use of ICT is developing at a satisfactory pace across the curriculum as teachers gain in confidence and competence in the use of computers. This represents significant improvement since the previous inspection, although some subjects, for example art and design, have yet to make effective use of digital technology.

61. In the lessons sampled, pupils were taught satisfactorily. The most competent pupils use computers independently, such as working with a presentation program to produce a feature about the school. They navigate the Internet effectively and are keen on word-processing recording their work. However, they are easily frustrated when required to write, such as producing questionnaires, and at these times their behaviour and attitudes interfere with learning.

## HUMANITIES

62. No lessons were observed in **geography** and, therefore, judgments cannot be made about overall provision, teaching and learning and pupils' achievements.
63. Only one lesson in **history** was sampled during the inspection, during which Year 7 pupils learned well. The teacher's effective pupil management and very good quality relationships underpinned high expectations. There was a strong focus on extending pupils' knowledge of the medieval period, developed mainly through discussion following the teacher's use of well-targeted questions. This was supported by effective use of the interactive whiteboard and reading exercises for the pupils, but there was a clear reluctance to get pupils to write. The teacher's use of multiple-choice questions on the whiteboard went some way towards evaluating what pupils had learnt, but not all participated equally in the way they would have done had they had a writing activity to complete.
64. Not enough lessons were seen in **religious education** for teaching and learning, pupils' achievements and overall provision to be evaluated. In the lessons sampled, pupils learned well as the teacher used effective teaching methods to develop pupils' understanding of the moral issues associated with modern social problems, such as when they considered the plight of those in poverty in the third world, as well as in Britain. In one lesson, a cartoon video was used effectively to support the story of Noah. The enthusiasm and commitment of the teacher and support staff enabled all pupils to take an interest and achieve well. They listened attentively and watched the cartoon with interest, answering questions sensibly. Staff provided excellent opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills and pupils responded well to the high expectations of good behaviour.
65. The subject co-ordinator is responsible for all teaching, and this ensures continuity of learning as pupils move through the school. While the school has broadly adopted the Tower Hamlets Locally Agreed Syllabus for the subject, opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge of all the major world faiths is underdeveloped in the planned curriculum. In addition, there is little evidence of the use of religious artefacts to enhance learning.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

66. **Music** was not a focus for this inspection and so no judgements on pupils' achievements and overall provision are possible. In the lesson sampled, teaching and learning were very good and pupils achieved very well. The teacher had good subject expertise, a natural enthusiasm and challenged pupils with activities that interested and motivated them. The teacher was positive and encouraging throughout, issuing clear instructions and demonstrating expertly stick work for the drummers. Such informative comments improved pupils' performance very quickly. Consequently, pupils go to lessons with an air of anticipation; music is fun and satisfying. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural and multi-cultural development. For instance, they are introduced to reggae music through the songs of Bob Marley and understand its cultural and historical links to slavery. Music makes a lively contribution to school life through drumming, guitar and disc jockey clubs that are held at lunchtimes or after school.
67. Insufficient lessons in **physical education** were seen for judgements to be made about teaching and learning, pupils' achievements or overall provision. In an athletics lesson sampled, pupils learned how to hold a baton and pass it on in a relay race. Although the teacher demonstrated the technique well and strongly encouraged the pupils throughout,

pupils were unable to maintain their effort and concentration for the period of the lesson and so their learning was erratic. On one afternoon each week, pupils choose between a variety of games or other activities. For instance, during the inspection some pupils did weight training while others played tennis or swam at a local community pool. Although these sessions were well supervised, they were unplanned and could not be seen as an element of the subject's programme of study. This has implications for the school's overall curriculum in terms of balance and taught, planned time.

68. The school is well staffed with physical education teachers, and they have access to a good range of learning resources. Outside facilities are very good, with ample hard surface playing areas, a tennis court, cricket nets and a large playing field. However, the indoor gym/hall is far too small, is used as a thoroughfare, and severely restricts the curriculum opportunities for pupils.

## **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership of the subject has enabled very good improvement to be made since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are very well taught, and this has raised their achievement and improved their attitudes, but assessment procedures lack rigour.
- The curriculum lacks breadth and balance.

### **Commentary**

69. Although pupils are taught very well, the narrowness of the curriculum, the absence of digital resources and shortcomings in assessment impact on their achievements. Overall, they achieve well.
70. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed, but he is very clear about how he sees the subject developing and is determined to raise its profile in the school. He inherited a much-disrupted subject and has worked hard to stabilise it and make the provision effective. In a very short space of time, he has shown flair and insight. Consequently, he has raised the levels of pupils' achievements so that they are now follow a GCSE course, and this reflects the enthusiasm he has engendered in them.
71. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has planned a curriculum that teaches pupils the basic processes of art and design, and introduces them to some of the important artists from different places and periods. This makes a strong contribution to their cultural awareness. However, there are limited opportunities for a wide range of three-dimensional work, and although the co-ordinator is planning to develop the use of computers current resources for digital art are insufficient. Assessment practices are at an early stage of development and do not enable effective tracking of pupils' achievements against National Curriculum attainment levels.
72. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject specialist who sets high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. A firm but caring approach is now paying dividends; pupils are becoming more interested in art and design and more positive and appreciative of their own efforts. They show competence in the use of paint and an imaginative approach to their work; their basic drawing, printmaking and painting skills are improving rapidly and this is evident in some of the displays around the school.
73. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, but it is inadequately furnished and has poor storage and display facilities. Improvement in the quality of display areas would greatly enhance the



celebration of pupils' work. The kiln is in need of servicing and consideration should be given to its siting and ventilation before it is brought into full use, as the three-dimensional aspect of the curriculum picks up pace.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good overall, and pupils achieve well.
- The programme for drugs, alcohol and tobacco abuse is particularly effective.
- Sex and relationships education requires further development.
- The residential provision and enrichment activities make a notable contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

### **Commentary**

74. All staff are committed to promoting pupils' personal development informally throughout the school day as well as through the PSHE curriculum and in other lessons. For instance, pupils enjoy the social aspects of eating together at lunchtime and sharing each other's achievements in assembly. Teaching and care staff provide positive role models in the quality of their interactions with each other, and in the concern, patience and respect they show towards pupils. However, at the present time this is only having limited impact. The examples set by school staff are not yet effective in developing in most pupils important personal and social skills, such as a willingness to get on and be considerate to others, to take more responsibility for their own learning and to consistently abide by the school rules and expectations. The School Council enables pupils to contribute ideas on the running of the school and is another good opportunity for pupils' self-development. In addition, enrichment activities such as clubs, visits, sports matches, and visitors all contribute to pupils' personal development.
75. The residential provision makes a good and consistent contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Personal and social skills are part of a planned and purposeful programme, both within the school setting and further afield. Pupils' individual care plans are agreed and are regularly reviewed. There are adequate and appropriate opportunities for pupils to extend their personal interests and experience or participate in leisure and recreational activities. Well-balanced meals and an emphasis on physical activities ensure pupils enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Throughout, pupils are increasingly encouraged to develop independence in preparation for life after school.
76. Pupils are taught well, and occasionally very well, in PSHE lessons. Teaching is generally lively, resourceful and consistently challenging. Subtle, timely and skilful prompting by support teachers and learning support assistants maintain pupils' involvement, and good resources and ICT enhance their learning. Teachers provide activities that are well matched to pupils' different needs and interests. Even so, on occasions pupils' behaviour disrupts the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning.
77. Overall pupils' achievements are good in both PSHE and citizenship education. They understand the idea of confidentiality, and know the importance of choices and the implications of making the wrong choices. As they move through the school, pupils become more knowledgeable and aware of issues such as how to stay safe, personal and family responsibilities, friends and peer pressure, finding a home, local government and the law. The

school has been especially successful in delivering a drugs, alcohol and tobacco education

programme. In recognition of its work in this area, the school has been given a SPEDI award by the local authority.

78. These subjects were not reported upon at the last inspection and so no judgement on improvement can be made. The leadership and management of the subjects are satisfactory, with the duties shared by two co-ordinators, for Years 7 – 9 and Years 10 and 11 respectively. Their development plan identifies the need to develop further the sex and relationships education programme, and they are currently examining the most appropriate adults to teach this and the syllabus for each age group. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision, with developing procedures for teachers to observe each other.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*  
*In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*