

St Paul's Way Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100970
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	276431
Inspection dates	7–8 June 2006
Reporting inspector	Lauren Ovenden

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeremy Willoughby Mr Simon Harris
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Shelmerdine Close London E3 4AN
Telephone number	020 7987 1883
Fax number	020 7537 4529

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Paul's Way is an average sized inner city comprehensive school serving an area of high social deprivation. The school has a high proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, with over 80% being from Bangladeshi heritage. The school has a very high level of students who speak English as an additional language, including some students who are at the early stages of learning English. The school is characterised by above average levels of students starting and leaving the school in all years. For example, this year the school has admitted a relatively large number of students in Year 9 following the closure of another local school. There are more students with learning difficulties and disabilities than average.

The school received specialist status in visual arts in 1998 and has recently been awarded a second specialism to provide vocational courses, such as construction and health and social care.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

- Use a wider range of teaching and learning strategies to promote more effective student learning and engagement
- Further develop the monitoring of departmental performance to ensure consistency and drive improvement
- Use data more effectively to inform teaching and improvement planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, characterised by strong working relationships between students and teachers in classrooms. Teachers know their subjects well and provide structured lessons that enable students to make adequate progress. Poor behaviour is dealt with effectively. Overall, the teaching in Key Stage 4 is slightly better than at Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 assessment data is used more effectively to plan learning, although there are some examples of effective practice in Key Stage 3 in some departments.

In the best lessons, teachers effectively plan engaging tasks that actively involve exploring concepts and developing the required skills. Teachers focus on what all students will gain from the lesson, effectively using their knowledge of individual's prior attainment to plan appropriate activities for particular groups and to monitor progression. In the most effective lessons, marking and homework are used effectively to reinforce and develop learning, providing clear guidance to students about how to improve their work

However, too much of the teaching and learning is just satisfactory. In the least effective lessons, a narrow range of activities are used and lessons are too teacher-led. This results in few opportunities to work independently or with others, and as a result, some students, especially girls, are passive in class and others work at a slow pace. Planning does not focus sufficiently on the outcomes of the lesson for different groups of students. The quality of homework and marking is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for all students including those who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Suitable action to improve the curriculum has been taken so that it better matches students' needs. Further developments, including the introduction of an extended range of vocational courses, are planned for September 2006. The continued development of college linked courses for students, particularly those in danger of exclusion, has been a positive

factor in keeping these students involved in learning and developing practical skills. Specialist status as a visual arts college has resulted in positive changes to the course choice in Years 10 and 11 by the introduction of a wider range of traditional and vocational subjects linked to future career pathways. Designation as a specialist college has also enabled the provision of an increased range of enrichment activities especially for visual arts subjects. The regular trips to London museums and art galleries stimulate learning in lessons. There are inconsistencies in the development of students' skills in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Some aspects of citizenship education are delivered through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, however, this is not fully integrated and mapped in other subjects across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There are some good features. For example, the very effective links with a wide range of external agencies to support vulnerable students and those with disabilities. Within the school, there is a coherent and inclusive approach to supporting the most vulnerable students, resulting in high levels of care. The First Base Unit is effectively used for students who have been internally excluded in order for them to continue learning while away from the classroom. One parent commented about the support for deaf learners, 'the service provided by staff is exceptional.' Arrangements for child protection are secure, however not all staff have received appropriate training. Risk assessment procedures are carried out in relation to school visits; however they are insufficiently robust around the school site. The school is aware that more rigorous supervision of stairways is needed to ensure all students use the correct staircases.

Monitoring of students' academic progress is satisfactory so that those who are in danger of underachieving are identified. Heads of Year and form tutors regularly review progress of individuals. However, not all students are involved in reviewing their progress as only a small proportion of Year 10 and 11 students chose to accept the invitation to the academic review days. Arrangements for informing learners about their targets and how well they are doing with their work are not consistent enough. Students commented that some teachers tell them how they can improve but this varies between subjects and year groups. New entrants to the school, to year groups other than in Year 7, are well supported and their progress monitored carefully. Students place a high value on the way they are guided and supported. For example, they commented positively about the way the school has improved course choice in Year 9 by providing individualised guidance and support on possible complementary courses, or option pathways.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Students

We enjoyed visiting your school recently. Thank you for welcoming us so warmly. It was good to talk to you about what you like about school, and it was clear that many of you enjoy school.

We judged that St. Paul's Way is a satisfactory school that helps you make appropriate progress in your studies. The school provides a great deal of support to help you develop as individuals - you are right to value this very highly. We also agree with you that the best lessons are where you get the chance to work together or complete different activities. The school is working hard to help you achieve; through changes in the courses you can take at Key Stage 4, by trying to improve results at Key Stage 3 and by involving you in target setting. You can play your part too, by working hard in all years at school and completing homework regularly.

We suggested that the school should look at ways to involve you more in lessons, using different approaches and tasks. This will help you achieve by making you think more about your work, but it will mean that you need to take part in all aspects of the lessons. We also think that the school could improve the way it checks its work, including how it uses data about how well you are doing. This will help the school sharpen its focus on the best ways to help you succeed.

May I take this opportunity, on behalf of the inspection team, to wish you all the very best for your future studies,

Lauren Ovenden

Her Majesty's Inspector