

# St Paul's Way Community School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100970
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	323385
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Chris Wood HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	857
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Christine Whatford board
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Grahame Price
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	Shelmerdine Close London E3 4AN
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7987 1883
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7537 4529

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	323385

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report 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.

## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

St Paul's Way Community School is smaller than the average secondary school. Many students join or leave the school at times other than those expected. The number of students who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Most students are from minority ethnic groups, with 85% of Bangladeshi heritage. Over 90% speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of educational needs, is more than twice that seen nationally.

The school has specialist status for Visual Arts and Applied Learning. The school also has a Deaf Support Base designed to meet the needs of 20 secondary-aged students with hearing impairments. A new school is currently being built on an adjacent site.

The local authority issued the school with a formal warning notice in June 2008 because of the decline in standards, and replaced the governing body with an interim executive board in September 2008. A new headteacher started in January 2009.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

St Paul's Way Community is an improving school, but its overall effectiveness is inadequate. Therefore, in accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards, and the personal development and well-being of its students.

The recent appointment and actions of an experienced headteacher and his senior team are beginning to reverse the decline in achievement and standards. The school's leaders recognise that there has been a breakdown in trust between students, their parents and the school, and have set about repairing confidence in the school's ability to provide young people with a consistently good education, as a matter of great urgency. Self-evaluation is now accurate and has led to discernible improvements in a short period. A strengthening of leadership at all levels, coupled with effective support from the interim executive board, means that there is now satisfactory capacity to improve further. This is seen in the improving progress made by students, particularly those in Key Stage 3.

Improving provision and better systems have not had sufficient time to have an impact on outcomes. Standards are exceptionally low, and achievement is inadequate across both key stages. As a result of this, students are poorly prepared for their future lives. Better tracking of the assessment of their learning shows that some students' progress is improving. However, this is not consistently so for all. Students' personal development and well-being are also inadequate, because too many students do not enjoy their lessons, and this disaffection hampers progress in learning. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average, but too many students arrive late to lessons and this holds them back further. Behaviour overall is inadequate, because movement around the school - particularly at break times - is disorderly and can be unsafe. While the care, guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory, some students rightly complain that the school does not do enough to ensure the maintenance of high standards of behaviour, or that the learning environment is kept clean.

The curriculum, which is satisfactory, meets the needs of a diverse range of students and is widening, so that opportunities to take vocational courses alongside academic routes are improved. Students are taught about healthy lifestyles and enjoy the opportunities they are given to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sport and the performing arts. They are also keen to have even more opportunities to contribute to the community. Visual arts are celebrated, and the work of the specialist status supports developments across the curriculum. Overall, this means that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are now satisfactory and improving, because of the increased emphasis on monitoring and accountability. There is a growing proportion of good lessons, notably in English, mathematics and science. However, lessons of this quality are not frequent enough to allow consistent progress to be made in all subjects. Academic guidance has also improved. Better use is made of assessment information, particularly in mathematics and science, to enable students to know how well they are doing, or what they need to do next to improve their work. However, this is not yet consistent across all subjects.

The number of questionnaires returned by parents was relatively low. For those parents who did reply, the greatest concern was about poor behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. Some parents commented positively about the support their children received.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of all teaching and learning to at least good, in order to swiftly raise achievement and standards for all students.
- Build positive relationships between adults, students and parents so that behaviour and safety improve and students take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Ensure that the information gained from regular assessment is used to help students to understand better what they need to do to improve and achieve challenging targets.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Students start with standards that are consistently below the national average. They make inadequate progress throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, so that by the end of Year 11 standards are exceptionally low. In 2008, 31% of students achieved five or more A\* to C grade GCSE passes, and 23% achieved five or more A\* to C passes including English and mathematics. These results are well below the national average. At Key Stage 3, there was a slight increase in the number of students achieving the expected levels in English, mathematics and science.

Overall, the achievement of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also inadequate. However, well-focused support for students with statements of special educational needs for behaviour and moderate learning difficulties means that these students achieve better than some other groups in the school. Students working in the Deaf Support Base achieve at a satisfactory rate.

As a matter of high priority, tracking systems have been strengthened, and these show that progress is improving at both key stages in a number of subjects. However, the full impact on standards has yet to be seen.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 4**

Most students get along well and enjoy coming to school, particularly in Key Stage 3. However, students in Key Stage 4 do not enjoy their lessons as much because they are not always sufficiently challenging or interesting. Many students expressed legitimate concerns about the quality of lessons taught by those teachers who are not permanent members of staff, or who do not insist strongly enough on high standards of behaviour. Behaviour is unsatisfactory, particularly between lessons and on the stairs, where it is disorderly and often unsafe. Lateness and low-level disruptions also hinder the progress of students in lessons. However, as a result of better provision in Key Stage 3, attitudes to learning have improved noticeably, and many more students now say they enjoy school and their lessons. Attendance in both key stages has also improved and is now broadly average overall.

Students say that they feel safe, but state that more needs to be done to reduce incidents of fighting and unsafe behaviour. Most students say that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Many say that they are confident to go to their teachers for help, and speak positively about the student support officers. However, they also state that other teachers do not take enough

interest in them or listen to what they have to say. Some rightly expressed concerns about the cleanliness of their learning environment and the hygiene of some areas, particularly the toilets.

Enterprise education throughout the school is not strong enough. This, combined with the low proportion of students that achieve well in English and mathematics, means that students are not currently being prepared adequately for their future lives. Students develop a satisfactory awareness of healthier lifestyles through participation in sport and through lessons. They have opportunities to contribute to the community through participation in the school council, projects and raising money for charities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school rightly assesses teaching and learning as satisfactory. Good lessons were observed in English, mathematics and science. However, they were not frequent enough across all subjects to ensure that students consistently make sufficient progress.

In the best lessons, teachers have secure subject knowledge and positive relationships with students, and planning takes into account individual learning needs. In one such lesson, the teacher's high expectations led to a Year 7 student explaining confidently and knowledgeably why he had chosen to use a poem by William Blake as part of a small-group presentation about the abolition of slavery.

However, in other lessons work is not sufficiently well matched to the students' needs, and there is a lack of pace and challenge. In these lessons, teachers often talk for too long and students become passive or disengaged. More effective use is being made of data to inform planning, but this is still too inconsistent.

Better systems have now been established to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. There are well-planned opportunities for teachers to develop skills through training and professional development, provided through partnership with a successful local school and other external support. These systems are relatively new, but are beginning to have a discernible impact on improving the quality of teaching and increasing the rates of progress made by students in lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced, and meets statutory requirements. There is an appropriate range of option choices for Years 10 and 11, and opportunities for vocational education have increased, including those for information and communication technology. The school has established productive partnerships with local colleges, where students can now access vocational courses such as horticulture and engineering. A well-planned programme of citizenship education helps students to make better-informed life choices. Students also take advantage of the opportunities to extend their talents through physical education, art, music and drama. The curriculum does not give enough opportunities for specific groups of pupils, particularly the more able, to make as much progress as they should.

There is a positive emphasis on the visual arts, in keeping with the specialist status of the school, and students achieve well in this subject. They benefit from participation in community

events and initiatives such as the Bows Arts project. Students have also been working successfully on a cross-curricular arts 'blood' topic in science and a geometry project in mathematics.

The school wisely plans to widen collaboration with other schools and colleges in order to broaden curriculum provision. Central to this is the school's bid to be the lead centre for the Diploma in Environmental and Land-Based Studies.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides adequate care, guidance and support for all groups of students, and so makes a satisfactory contribution to students' personal development and achievement. The school meets the requirements to safeguard students, but some justifiably think that the school could do more to promote higher standards of behaviour.

Academic guidance and tracking of students' progress have improved, particularly in mathematics and science where they have a clearer understanding of their targets and progress. However, there are inconsistencies in the application of these systems, and in some circumstances targets are not challenging enough. Marking of students' work is more detailed but does not consistently give them enough advice on how to improve their work.

There are good and improving relations with outside agencies, who give effective additional support to students, particularly the most vulnerable. In school, there is a range of effective support available for those students with differing learning needs. For example, the support for students who work in the Deaf Support Base is particularly well targeted to meet their individual needs, and this enables them to make satisfactory progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The new, experienced headteacher provides strong leadership. He has a clear and accurate view of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, and has begun to establish an ambitious and compelling vision of what needs to be done to bring about rapid improvements. This view is shared by other leaders and many staff. The students speak positively about the changes that have been introduced in a short time, and the impact that these have had on the school. Year 11 students told inspectors they felt that their views were now being listened to and as a result they were more motivated to work hard in their lessons.

The interim executive board is supportive of the school and has high aspirations for students. Its members are skilled and well informed about the needs of the school. They share the headteacher's determination to act decisively and work closely with the staff to ensure that the school improves quickly. Other recent appointments at senior leadership level have further strengthened the school's capacity to make the necessary improvements in all areas of its work.

The quality of middle leadership is also improving rapidly in some subjects and year groups. For example, the tracking of pupil progress by subject leaders in mathematics and science is particularly strong. Senior leaders have supported middle leaders to evaluate accurately the areas of their responsibility. However, the quality of evaluation is not always rigorous or consistent across all subject areas. More effective use is also being made of data, but until recently there has not been a sufficiently sharp focus on the progress made by all students.

This means that, although the target-setting process is beginning to be more rigorous, leaders and managers have not hitherto made sufficient use of challenging targets to raise standards.

Links with parents and the local community are beginning to be re-established as a matter of priority, and partnerships with other schools and external agencies are in place. Relationships within the school are increasingly harmonious such that, overall, the school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Leaders know their students well and have instigated programmes, such as the Year 9 intervention plan, that seek to address potential barriers to learning and develop their personal and social skills.



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

---

<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	4
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	4
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	4
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	4
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	4
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 April 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of St Paul's Way Community School, London, E3 4AN

You will remember that we visited your school recently, and had the opportunity to talk with some of you and see you at work in lessons. We were very grateful for your welcome, and the honesty and maturity with which you talked about your school. Many of you were right when you told us what was good about the school and what needed to improve. These are the main things we found.

- The school has been through difficult times but is now improving, particularly since your new headteacher took over. Most of you enjoy coming to school, and want to play your part by working with each other and the adults in your school to help it improve further.
- You enjoy taking part in sport and other activities such as drama.
- You do really well at art and have taken part in some interesting projects.
- Not enough of you do well in your exams, because some of the lessons in Years 10 and 11 are not always interesting or challenging enough. Many of you know how well you are doing, but you are not always sure what you have to do to get better.
- Many of you do not enjoy your lessons, especially when the teachers do not know you well or take time to listen carefully enough to what you say.
- Your behaviour is sometimes too boisterous, particularly on the stairs, and this means that you and others might have accidents.
- Although more of you are coming to school regularly, you do not always go to lessons on time, and this holds you back.
- You find that some parts of the school are not kept clean enough.

Some things need to improve really quickly, so we have given your school a 'notice to improve' because its overall effectiveness is currently inadequate. This means that inspectors will come back in a few months' time to check what progress has been made. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that:

- more of your lessons are interesting and challenging, so that your enjoyment of learning improves and you make better progress
- adults and students work really closely, so that you get on much better and become more involved and motivated to learn
- teachers take time to help you understand exactly what you need to do to improve your work to the standards you should achieve.

You can help by attending regularly, turning up to lessons on time, and making sure that you concentrate and behave well at all times.

I wish you the very best of futures.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Wood

Her Majesty's Inspector