

Bow School

44 Twelvetees Crescent, Bow, London E3 3QW

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and other senior leaders provide strong leadership.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that still need development.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average.
- The sixth form is good. Sixth-form students attend well and are punctual. They are making good progress in academic and vocational courses.
- Pupils make good progress in English, languages and science. Pupils' examination results in these subjects are above national averages. Progress and achievement in GCSE mathematics dipped in 2017, but progress of current pupils is stronger.
- The curriculum matches most pupils' needs and is broad and balanced. Pupils of all abilities have opportunities to succeed.
- Leaders make careful checks on the quality of teaching. These checks take into account pupils' work and the progress they make.
- Generally, most pupils behave well around the school. While behaviour is improving rapidly, some pupils commented that poor behaviour of a few has an impact on their learning.
- Overall, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress, but most-able pupils do not always make the progress they should.
- Middle leaders understand the school's priorities, but are less consistent about the part they play in driving forward improvements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes by ensuring that all teachers set the most able pupils suitably challenging tasks, so that they make outstanding progress.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that teachers insist on high standards of behaviour to reduce low-level disruption in classrooms, and to support pupils to develop respectful attitudes.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that middle leaders evaluate the impact of their work more robustly, and amend strategies accordingly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Well-supported by senior leaders, she has the highest expectations in relation to the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour. Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed.
- Leaders comprehensively monitor and track the work of the school. However, at times, a sharper focus is needed on how to use this information effectively to measure impact. Middle leaders understand the school priorities, but are less consistent about their accountability in driving forward improvements.
- Teachers are keen to develop their practice and value the professional development opportunities they have.
- Leaders have ensured that the additional pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to support pupils in the classroom. Additional funding is used effectively to support pupils who arrive at the school in Year 7 needing to catch up in English and mathematics
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' progress, behaviour, personal development and welfare. Leaders have planned the curriculum well, so that it is broad and balanced. However, the timetabling of creative subjects in Year 9 does not enable pupils to develop fully the range of skills needed to be successful in their study at key stage 4. Governors and senior leaders are aware of this and are reviewing the key stage 3 curriculum. Overall, the curriculum provides a wide range of courses, including work-related subjects, which prepare pupils well for their next steps in education, training or employment.
- An extensive range of extra-curricular activities supports the curriculum well. These activities enable pupils to deepen their understanding of learning beyond the classroom. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a visit to the First World War battlefields and taking part in competitions, for example designing a Formula One car.
- Pupils receive regular opportunities to develop their understanding of and prepare for life in modern Britain. Through assemblies and tutor time activities, pupils are able to develop their understanding of different religious beliefs and moral points of view.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has a secure understanding of the quality of the school's strengths and of those areas that require further development. Governors receive regular, detailed reports from senior leaders. They use these to provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to the headteacher.
- Members of the governing body have a wide set of skills and experiences, which are used effectively in carrying out their duties. They have ensured that the spending of the pupil premium and other funding is strategically planned. Governors make sure that performance management is carried out effectively, including that of the headteacher.
- Governors understand their responsibility in relation to safeguarding pupils and have

received appropriate training. Procedures for the safer recruitment of staff are in place and meet statutory requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a safeguarding culture in which staff play an important role in keeping pupils safe. Pupils said that they feel safe and well cared for at school. They can speak to staff if they have any concerns. Pupils said that bullying is rare, but they know whom to approach if it does happen. They believe that the school deals with bullying effectively.
- Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, for example about child exploitation and the 'Prevent' duty. They are clear about their responsibilities to report their concerns. School staff make sure that working relationships between themselves and other agencies are strong in order to support vulnerable pupils. Staff also keep close contact with parents and carers to help keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The majority of teachers have good subject knowledge. This, together with effective questioning, deepens pupils' understanding and leads to strong progress.
- Inspectors saw many examples of teachers' useful feedback and guidance, in line with the school's policy. Pupils are given opportunities to correct their mistakes and improve their work, which leads to their improved knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders provide teachers with information about the starting points of their pupils. This enables teachers to plan effectively for lessons that meet the needs of all pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Homework is used to embed and develop knowledge.
- Pupils generally take pride in their work. Exercise books and folders are well presented.
- The school has a clear and overarching assessment policy, supplemented by subject-specific guidance. This helps teachers assess pupils' work in a way that is meaningful and relevant to the subject. Teachers use this to identify any pupils who fall behind and to provide additional support.
- Teachers are skilled in using examination criteria to help pupils understand precisely what they need to do to make strong progress.
- Pupils read well, the majority with accuracy and fluency.
- Teachers plan opportunities to enrich pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education as part of the curriculum. For example, in one lesson pupils were discussing the impact of social media on the well-being of young people.
- The school's drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning is having a positive impact in the large majority of lessons. Overall teaching and learning are good, but there are still variations between subject areas and between subjects. Leaders are

aware and are addressing this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong, and they take pride in their work and their appearance.
- The school uses a range of approaches, including assemblies, lessons and 'drop-down' days to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, in one class, pupils discussed literature and debated whether bestselling novels encourage sexism. Pupils contributed well to a lively debate, offering mature views on this issue.
- Leaders develop pupils' life skills, as well as their academic skills. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, including by being pupil representatives, for example in diversity, race and gender. One pupil commented, 'It is a real privilege to have these opportunities and organise events to celebrate International Women's Day.'
- Pupils receive highly effective impartial careers advice and guidance. Pupils are given useful information about the different training courses and careers that are open to them. The school has built up some excellent partnerships with businesses, which raise pupils' aspirations and support their ambitions. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their next steps when they leave school.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspectors showed sensible awareness of issues such as radicalisation and extremism, online safety and ways to keep healthy.
- Pupils are given strong messages about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils said that bullying is rare, but they know whom to approach if it does happen. The majority of pupils believe that the school deals with bullying quickly and effectively.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and those who met inspectors were positive about the school. One parent said, 'My daughter has settled well and very quickly felt part of the Bow family.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils and staff recognise that behaviour is rapidly improving. Further improvement, rightly, remains a priority.
- A minority of teachers do not routinely challenge low-level disruption in lessons. Some pupils said that the poor behaviour of a few pupils in their lessons has a negative impact on their learning. A small number of pupils do not always show respect to staff. Leaders have put clear systems in place to help teachers effectively manage the

behaviour of pupils.

- Behaviour outside of lessons is generally good. However, a small number of pupils do not show enough regard for the systems in place to promote effective movement around the building, or to the staff enforcing them.
- Following raised expectations of behaviour, the number of pupils who were excluded from school in recent years has been high. However, pastoral support has encouraged pupils to manage their behaviour more effectively, and the proportion of pupils who are excluded from school has reduced. It remains above the national average.
- Whole-school attendance is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced and continues to do so.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupil outcomes are good because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time is good. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that pupils are making consistently good progress across most subjects. The school's own records of pupils' progress confirm this.
- The GCSE cohort for 2017 was all boys. GCSE results in 2017 show that boys' progress overall in their best eight subjects was above the national average for boys, and their attainment was in line with national averages.
- GCSE results in 2017 show that pupils made strong progress in English, languages and science, but weak progress in design technology.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in 2017 was strong. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils performed well across the curriculum, and school data suggests that this positive trend is continuing.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made similarly good progress as their peers, regardless of their starting points.
- In 2017 GCSE examinations, the progress of pupils in mathematics was weak, after being a strength of the school. Leaders have taken action to address this dip in performance, and current pupils are making good progress, overall.
- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment because they are taking appropriate qualifications and achieving well. Combined with good-quality careers advice, this is giving pupils the self-confidence to progress successfully to appropriate places of education, training and employment.
- The most able pupils do not make accelerated progress across all of the subjects that they study. This is because teachers do not always ensure that these pupils complete work that is sufficiently challenging and enables them to attain the highest levels.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The leadership of the sixth form is good. The leader of the sixth form closely monitors students' learning and ensures that good progress is made.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Across a range of subjects, students are confident in debate and discussion. The high quality of students' written work reflects their enthusiasm for their studies. Teachers use questioning effectively to extend students' learning and to encourage reflection. Feedback provided to students is detailed and enables them to make greater progress.
- Post-16 students feel safe and enjoy being in school. They value the small classes, which they said gives them personalised support to improve.
- In 2017, students' progress on A-level courses was below the national average. However, the small size of the cohort and the newness of the sixth form make year-on-year analysis of outcomes and trends unreliable. Students taking English and mathematics made progress that was above the national average.
- A small number of students who enter the sixth form without a higher grade in GCSE English and mathematics make good progress. They gain grade 5 in the subjects because of good curriculum provision and effective teaching.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form because teachers are vigilant, and effective systems are consistently followed.
- Post-16 students have access to a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including university days, visits to the theatre, sporting activities and debating.
- Leaders have ensured that a strong programme of careers advice and guidance prepares students for their next steps in education, employment or training. Students work with business mentors who support them with applications and interviews for university, employment and apprenticeships.
- A great majority of pupils go on to higher education when they leave school and gain places at a range of universities.

School details

Unique reference number	100965
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10049010

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	997
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Lake
Headteacher	Cath Smith
Telephone number	0207 536 5525
Website	www.bow-school.org.uk
Email address	bs@bow-school.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2013

Information about this school

- Bow School is a maintained secondary school for girls and boys.
- The school provides education for girls and boys between the ages of 11 and 19.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above

average.

- The school received its last full inspection in March 2013 and was judged good.
- The school uses two alternative providers. They are London East and City Gateway.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects throughout the school. Inspectors reviewed pupils' work. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during break and lunchtimes and at lesson changeover times.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning and behaviour in an assembly and during registration.
- Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Documentation, policies and the school's practices were scrutinised, in particular with regard to behaviour, bullying, safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the governors and several members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and formally, including during visits to classrooms.
- The inspection considered the views of 12 parents who replied to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors evaluated the views of 58 staff and 56 pupils who completed Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Sarah Parker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
James Whiting	Ofsted Inspector
Anthony Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Terry Millar	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
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