

Inspection of a good school: Bow School

44 Twelvetrees Crescent, Bow, London E3 3QW

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

Outcome

Bow School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this ambitious, forward-looking school, where they become 'world-ready' and 'career-ready'. Pupils embrace leaders' high aspirations. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve very well. The school is determined to prepare pupils for the next stage of life and learning. Students in the growing sixth form succeed in their studies. Many go on to top universities and successful careers.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It matches, and sometimes exceeds, the requirements of the national curriculum. The school has made sure that the curriculum reflects the community and its diversity and also aims at expanding pupils' horizons. In lessons and beyond, there is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural capital. Pupils learn the school's values of respect, determination, adaptability, curiosity and responsibility. These are woven through the pastoral curriculum and are evident in classroom interactions. Pupils appreciate that staff seek and consider their views.

Pupils and sixth-form students are safe. They behave respectfully and are keen to learn. Reported bullying is rare. When it does happen, it is dealt with effectively.

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

The school provides an engaging, relevant curriculum that equips pupils for becoming responsible active citizens. Learning is linked to real-world contexts. For example, in mathematics, knowledge is applied to situations such as understanding payslips. In physical education (PE), teachers ensure that all pupils are involved in at least one sport or fitness activity that they say they would like to continue to take up in the future.

All pupils follow a broad, balanced range of subjects in all year groups. The school ensures that no pupil is left behind. This means all pupils with SEND are supported to access, and progress within, the wider curriculum offer. The curriculum in all subjects ensures pupils revise and build on their prior knowledge at a higher level over the years. The sixth form offers courses that meet the range of students' needs and interests. The curriculum is inclusive and empowering. It prepares students well to follow their aspirations for the future. The school prioritises the teaching of reading. Strategies are in

place to ensure that all pupils who are behind in their reading, including those who are just beginning to read, become confident, fluent readers.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. For example, most teachers of Spanish and French are native speakers who model excellent pronunciation. Language teachers also ensure that pupils develop a sophisticated insight into grammar. Year 10 pupils confidently used terms such as 'intensifier' and 'cognate'. Year 11 English pupils used analytical verbs such as 'portrays', 'characterises', 'evokes' and 'foreshadows'. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to allow pupils to practise speaking in order to develop their confidence and competence. Teachers explain clearly and use a plethora of engaging activities to check what pupils know and understand. They use assessment well to plan teaching and to address gaps and misconceptions. A raft of recall activities help pupils know and remember more in the long term.

Work in pupils' books is generally of a high standard. Pupils take pride in their work and have developed sound habits, including in self-assessment. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are reflected in attendance and punctuality rates. These are high, including in the sixth form. Behaviour throughout the school is calm and considerate, and low-level disruption is rare. Pupils and staff have seen a marked improvement in standards of behaviour over the past few years.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their lives and studies. The comprehensive personal development programme covers all aspects of citizenship. Pupils are taught how to keep safe online, as well as in the local area. They are taught about healthy relationships and how to protect their mental health. The careers programme is carefully woven through tutor periods, assemblies and subject lessons in each year group, encouraging pupils to regularly consider their futures. Older pupils benefit from impartial, individualised career advice and guidance.

There is a real wealth of enrichment activities available. These include drama, music, debating, green club and sporting activities. The majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, take part in the extra-curricular offer. There are also numerous school trips, with each pupil having participated in at least two last year.

Pupils and sixth-form students appreciate the scope to develop as leaders and to contribute to the wider life of the school and community. This includes outreach work to feeder primary schools and sports leadership. Some pupils and sixth-form students have become mental health ambassadors. They are trained to be supportive mentors to fellow pupils who are struggling with their mental health. Other pupils and students support school leaders through supervisory roles, such as lunch duties. Some pupils help to put up displays around the school. Others support younger pupils learning to read.

Staff say that they are proud to work at the school. They are enthusiastic about improvements in recent years. Staff say that leaders and governors are approachable and that they are sensitive to their colleagues' workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, staff do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunity to practise and extend their spoken language. As a result, some pupils struggle to articulate their understanding. The school should ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise speaking with accuracy and fluency.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

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

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

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	100965
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10289799
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,265
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Daniel Peter Alec Hassell
Headteacher	Danny Lye
Website	www.bow-school.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses three alternative providers. They are London East Alternative Provision, 'It's Your Life' and Catchup Academy.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers, curriculum leaders, governors, teachers, including early career teachers, and the chief executive officer of Tower Hamlets Education Partnership.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including those on offer in the sixth form.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and sixth-form students in meetings at social times.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including data on off-rolling, nationally published outcomes data, and data on attendance, behaviour and destinations.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Anne Hudson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Hatchett	Ofsted Inspector
Terry Millar	Ofsted Inspector

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