

Bow School

Paton Close, Fairfield Road, London, E3 2QD

Inspection dates 14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Students' GCSE results have improved significantly since the last inspection so that by the end of Year 11 students reach broadly average standards in almost all subjects.
- Teaching is good and continues to improve, and as a result all groups of students make good progress and achieve well in their learning.
- Students' progress is checked regularly, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Students who fall behind in their lessons get help quickly.
- Students behave well, enjoy school and feel safe. High levels of respect are shown across the school as a community.
- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and provides strong leadership. All staff share her commitment to improving teaching and students' achievement.
- The governors know the school well. They are clear about its strengths and where it needs to improve. They hold staff to account for the quality of the school's performance and teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough; there remains some teaching which requires improvement.
- Although most marking is thorough and gives good advice to students about improving their work, this good practice is not evident in all subjects.
- In a small number of lessons students do not have enough opportunities to work on their own or in groups to research their own ideas because teachers spend too much time talking rather than letting students take responsibility for their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, 12 of which were joint observations with senior staff. They examined students' books, talked to students about their work, and heard students read in lessons.
- Discussions were held with four different groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, a representative from the local authority, and a wide range of staff including the headteacher, senior staff and middle leaders.
- Insufficient responses were made by parents and carers on the online questionnaire Parent View to register. However, views of parents and carers obtained recently by the school were taken into account, and the views of 14 staff who returned staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at examination results and evaluated the school's records of students' progress. They examined records and policies relating to behaviour and attendance, and reviewed the school's self-evaluation report, improvement plans, performance management systems and the use of the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Ann Sydney	Additional inspector
Samuel Ofori-Kyereh	Additional inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school changed its name from Bow School of Maths and Computing to Bow School in February 2013.
- The school is a smaller than average boys' secondary school and has a falling roll.
- Over three quarters of students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for specific groups including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care), which is significantly higher than average.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for Year 7 catch-up premium (additional support to improve literacy and numeracy skills) is above average.
- There are significantly more students from minority ethnic backgrounds than in most schools. The largest group is of Bangladeshi origin.
- For over three quarters of students, English is an additional language, which is significantly higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion of students on the school action plus programme or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- One student receives alternative provision at Tower Hamlet College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There are ten newly qualified teachers employed at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement further by ensuring that a higher proportion of teaching is outstanding by making sure that:
 - teachers always plan work that accurately matches the needs and abilities of all students so that lessons run at a brisk pace and students remain engaged at all times
 - marking and assessment are thorough in every subject and students are given enough time to discuss and reflect on the comments written on their work
 - there is a balance between teacher-led activities and students being given opportunities to work by themselves or collaboratively researching their own ideas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- This is a good and improving school. When students join in Year 7, their levels of attainment are well-below average. The school works hard to improve students' skills in reading, writing and speaking, and by the end of Year 11 students' attainment is broadly average. This represents good progress across a range of subjects in all years.
- GCSE results have risen over the last three years, notably in English and mathematics. Although the proportion of students gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, and those achieving the higher grades of A and A* are still slightly below the national average, this represents good achievement given the students' starting points.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs progress as well as their peers because the school provides additional support for each student tailored to meet their particular needs. They benefit from one-to-one, small-group teaching and in-class support from specialist teaching assistants.
- The additional funding used for students eligible for pupil premium is used effectively to provide extra support and challenge for appropriate students so that the gap in their attainment against all students nationally is closing rapidly. There is very little difference in the progress and attainment of those students in school who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not. There is no significant difference in their average points scores.
- Those students who enter Year 7 with attainment below national expectations and who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up programme receive effective additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result of this the school's assessment data show that these students are making faster progress so that the gap between them and others in their year is being reduced.
- The progress of students who speak English as an additional language is good. This is due to the effectively targeted support that they receive, and on the emphasis on speaking, listening and writing in subjects such as science and humanities that allows students to practise and consolidate the literacy skills learnt in English.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved over time and is now good with examples of outstanding practice. Evidence from lesson observations, from looking at the quality of students' work and teachers' records shows that good teaching has helped all groups of students do well.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers plan and set work that is challenging and provides a variety of activities to engage students' interest. This was seen in a Year 8 art lesson when students were designing and making masks using mosaic. The teacher explained clearly what was expected of students, allowed them to share ideas and linked the practical work to literacy and the understanding of key words. Students were excited and engaged in their work, were well supported and challenged to do better by the teacher and a teaching assistant, and as a result their learning and progress were outstanding.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers do not plan activities that capture and maintain students' attention, and there are missed opportunities to challenge pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In these lessons the pace of learning is slow, students spend too long listening to the teacher and have too few opportunities to work on their own or in groups to research and solve problems for themselves.
- Regular and thorough marking in most subjects gives students clear guidance on how to improve their work. The best marking is in English and humanities with much evidence of consistently good quality feedback from the teacher, and students' assessing their own and other students' work. However, this is not uniform across all subjects. In a small number of

classes written feedback is limited; it does not contain enough detail on how to improve work to the next level, and teachers do not routinely check that students are acting on advice.

- Support for disabled students, those who have special educational needs, those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those for whom English is their second language is consistently good. Their progress is checked regularly and extra help is provided when it is needed. The skills of additional adults are well used to help these students and as a result they make good and sometimes outstanding progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Students are friendly and polite, and show respect towards one another and to adults. Relationships in lessons are good so that pupils work well together in teams and groups.
- Attendance is above average. Students are happy to come to school and are punctual. They respond to good quality teaching and show positive attitudes to learning.
- Students are aware of different kinds of bullying including racist behaviour and homophobia. They told inspectors that bullying rarely happens and, on the very few occasions that it does, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.
- In tutor time and in lessons, teachers give students a good understanding of how to stay safe. They cover a variety of themes about the importance of healthy lifestyles and the dangers and effects of drugs and substance abuse. This was evident in a Year 8 citizenship lesson when students were engaged in a debate about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Students were able to explore their ideas and views, and in the process develop a range of literacy and communication skills, and their progress was outstanding.
- Students are encouraged to use modern technology safely. They are well informed about the dangers of the internet and of cyber-bullying.
- In a recent survey conducted by the school, parents and carers agreed that the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and the senior leadership team. They have worked effectively to raise achievement and improve teaching and are well supported by the main body of staff who are keen for the school to improve further. Staff morale is high. Almost all responses to the staff questionnaire were positive.
- The school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Senior staff and governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are rigorous and well established. Joint observations with members of the senior leadership confirmed the accuracy of the school's assessment of teaching and learning. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the effectiveness with which some subject leaders check on the marking of students' work.
- Senior staff meet regularly with teachers and middle managers to discuss progress towards reaching their annual objectives. Training is closely linked to improving teaching and underperformance is dealt with quickly. Salary increases are not awarded unless performance over time warrants them.
- The curriculum has been adapted well to suit the range of students' needs and to accommodate falling student numbers. Additional support is given to students who need more help with literacy and numeracy to improve their progress. The range of experiences available to students contributes positively to their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. This is evident through lessons, and through a wide range of cultural visits and activities. The school has strong links with a school in Sri Lanka.

- The school is effective at ensuring an equality of opportunity for all students, in fostering good relationships with and beyond the school community and in tackling any form of discrimination robustly. Arrangements for safeguarding students are good.
 - There is a positive working relationship between the school and the local authority. Monitoring by the local authority is light touch but effective; this includes regular reviews of the school's performance, support for newly qualified teachers and helpful advice about performance management.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Leadership of the governing body is strong and well informed. Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and the quality of teaching and learning. Through the training that they have received, they analyse outcomes, including examination performance, and ask searching questions about students' progress and achievement when compared to similar schools nationally. They are aware of the strengths that exist in teaching and are involved fully in ensuring that there are close links between performance management, salary progression and the effectiveness of teaching. They monitor expenditure closely including the way the pupil and Year 7 catch-up premium money is spent and ensure that financial and other resources are used to raise standards of teaching and achievement.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100965
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	404747

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	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	522
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Thompson
Headteacher	Cath Smith
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 May 2011
Telephone number	020 8980 0118
Fax number	020 8980 1556
Email address	bs@bow-school.org.uk

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