

St Paul's Way Trust School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100970
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	343735
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Emma Ing HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation Trust
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	790
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Professor Peter Heathcote
Headteacher	Mr Grahame Price
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 March 2009
School address	Shelmerdine Close Bow London E3 4AN
Telephone number	020 7987 1883
Fax number	020 7537 4529
Email address	pgrahame@stpaulsway.org

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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Introduction

This inspection was carried by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors, parents, and staff. Twenty-seven lessons taught by different teachers were observed. Inspectors looked at the school's work, and considered the school's improvement planning, tracking data, policies, self-evaluation and the minutes of the interim executive board and governing body. Twenty-seven parents and carers returned questionnaires and these, alongside those returned by students and staff, were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well assessment is used to track progress, set challenging targets and modify teaching to meet all needs
- how effectively the school has improved the way it works in partnership with parents, students, welfare agencies and organisations in the local community to get the best for students
- the degree to which deaf students benefit from their education at this school.

Information about the school

Following an Ofsted inspection in March 2009, St Paul's Way Community School was given a notice to improve. Significant improvement was required in relation to achievement and standards and the personal development and well-being of students, including their punctuality and behaviour. The report indicates that there had been a breakdown in trust between students, their parents and the school. At the time of the inspection the current headteacher had only very recently joined the school.

The school was reorganised in September 2009 with the result that 29 teachers were made redundant. The school became a national challenge trust school in February 2010. It specialises in visual arts and is also a Faraday science school. The school has been awarded the Artsmark silver award. A building programme is well underway and the school will move into a new suite of buildings in January 2011.

The school is relatively small and is undersubscribed. Most students are Bangladeshi, but there are also a small number of Black British African students, and some White and White British students. Almost all students speak English as an additional language. A large proportion of students are believed to be entitled to free school meals. A high number of students join or leave the school part-way through their secondary education. There is a higher than average proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including 26 deaf students who are catered for in the deaf support base.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This school has come a long way in the last year. It is currently providing a satisfactory education, but the improvements that have been made since the last inspection are huge and it is securely on track to be good or even excellent.

All groups of students, including deaf students and those who are at an early stage of learning English, make good progress. This is for a number of reasons:

- teaching is good and lessons are consistently well structured
- students are now well behaved and they try hard
- students' attendance is now good
- the school tracks the progress of students well, sets them challenging targets and is quick to intervene and help those who are at risk of falling behind
- excellent systems are in place to support students moving into the school, raise their aspirations and advise them on future options
- the curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities to ensure that the needs of all students are well met
- the school works closely with a wide range of different organisations, including the local authority, care providers and providers of higher education, to get the best for its students.

Despite the fact that the current buildings are shabby and run-down, this school is a happy place. Students are courteous and bubble with enthusiasm and pride in their achievements. They quickly get down to work in lessons, although they are not yet encouraged to take full responsibility for their own learning. They are thrilled with the way in which their school has improved. They feel extremely safe, well cared for and confident that their views are listened to. Through a range of different schemes, they take an active role in the smooth running of the school and in the wider community, for example as science ambassadors and by writing to the council to ask for areas around the school to be cleaned up.

Students' attainment has improved significantly over the last year and is on track to improve further, but it is still below average. The school recognises that there are several areas of weakness holding back the pace of improvement. Teaching, which is generally good, does not cater well enough for the individual learning needs of each student in lessons, particularly for those at either end of the ability spectrum or who are at an early stage of learning English. Teachers do attend to the development of literacy and oracy skills, but are not yet doing enough to encourage every student to

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be a confident speaker of standard English. Some teachers give very good feedback to students on their work, clearly pinpointing the next steps that they need to take in order to improve, but this is not consistent across the school.

The huge improvements in students' behaviour, attendance and progress and in the quality of teaching and care have taken place because the headteacher has been rigorous and robust in his leadership of the school. Difficult decisions have been made with the strong support of an interim executive board and the local authority. With outstanding leadership the headteacher has built teams throughout the school that are consistent, self-critical, highly motivated and rapidly developing new skills. Leaders at all levels monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility robustly, set challenging targets and plan carefully to drive improvement. For these reasons the school's current leadership and capacity to further improve are outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further drive improvements in the attainment of students by:
 - making sure that teachers use assessment information, knowledge of students' English language needs and individual education plans to match their teaching and the activities set more closely to the individual learning needs of students
 - routinely supporting the development of students' standard spoken English
 - devising ways to help students develop confidence and independent habits of learning
 - ensuring that students receive consistently high-quality diagnostic feedback to help them take the next steps in their learning.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

From low starting points, students make good progress, although their overall attainment remains low. Their achievement therefore is currently satisfactory, but it is improving.

'Everyone is determined to learn now'. This view was expressed by a Year 10 student to sum up how the school has changed and why she is proud of it. Attendance has shot up and students are punctual to lessons. Once there, they are responsive, diligent and respectful of their teachers and of each other's right to learn. When asked they try to assess their own and others' work against set criteria, but they find this difficult. They are not yet proactive in developing and taking responsibility for their own learning. Students' books reveal that most keep up with class and homework and present their work well, but where they have not done so, they are not always good at catching up. The pace of learning in lessons is good. Those who

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have opportunities to extend their learning through educational activities are inspired by them. Most students express determination to go on and achieve great things in their lives.

The large number of students who are at an early stage of learning English make good progress overall, but their progress in lessons is not as good as that of their peers because teachers are not offering them tailored support in language. Similarly, those who have learning difficulties and those who are talented are not getting the individualised support in lessons that would really extend their learning. However, the support they receive out of lessons compensates for this.

Not long ago, students, their parents and carers, were concerned that they were not safe at this school, but this has changed dramatically. They have made recommendations and decisions that have changed the nature of their school and the new buildings. Parents and carers express relief and gratitude that their children now like going to school and they no longer have to worry about their safety, confident that the school has helped them keep their children safe by informing them about internet safety and bullying policies. Further, they feel that their children are being taught to behave well.

Students respond well to the inter-faith work of the school and are involved in a wide range of different cultural, dramatic and artistic activities. Older students, who are mentored by people from local businesses and universities, are developing the breadth of their understanding of the wider work environment but too many remain hampered by their relatively weak basic skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

All teachers plan consistently and carefully for tightly structured lessons that are focused on clear learning objectives. Relationships between teachers and students are very positive and work gets done at a good pace. However, although improved student responses mean that teachers can now securely introduce group work and independent learning, few lessons feature these techniques. Teachers do assess carefully and also use tracking data to plan, but they are not using assessment to determine activities and learning that are closely personal to the particular learning needs of individuals. Nor is assessment used well enough during lessons to determine the course of the lesson for different groups and so make sure that every student is fully challenged.

The school offers a good curriculum which is carefully tailored to meet the different needs and aspirations of students. There is a strong focus on practical science through the Faraday science specialism, with periodic full days of investigative science work. Links with partner organisations offer further opportunities for students to enjoy scientific challenges. Good support is offered to those who need it through additional activities provided by the deaf support base or the special educational needs team, and the many additional revision sessions, Saturday school and holiday clubs are much valued by students. There is a good range of course options, including vocational courses and also opportunities for early entry to some GCSEs. The school supports students in developing their business awareness and preparedness for the world of work well, working in partnership with Tower Hamlets Education and Business Partnership and many businesses that are based locally.

The school pays close attention to the needs of both the students and their families. The school works very effectively with a wide range of partners to support more vulnerable students. The clearly targeted behaviour support has resulted in significant improvements and there are striking examples of support having led to improved confidence and achievement of individuals. The school seeks to work closely with parents and carers, for example by offering courses to help them manage their children's transition to the school. Similarly, very good advice and guidance are offered to ensure that students leaving the school make positive aspirational choices about their future careers. The support for students at the early stage of learning English and for those who have difficulty with their studies is very good outside lessons, but is not consistently good in mainstream classes. Students in the deaf resource base are well supported and achieve well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where	2

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relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Passion, clarity of vision and consistency of practice characterise the leadership of this school. Leaders are successful because the needs of the students and their families are central to their approach and they are good at listening to them and at supporting each other. They work exceptionally effectively with a very wide range of outside partners to ensure high-quality support and a breadth of opportunities for individuals and groups of students. They play an important part in the St Paul's Way transformation project that is seeking to regenerate the local community. This includes supporting the development of arts and science in local primary schools.

Leaders' analysis of weakness and planning for improvement is accurate (if modest), and comprehensive. The newly formed governing body is highly strategic in its approach and has effective systems in place to hold the school leaders to account. Governors have taken a robust line on ensuring that students' well-being is properly safeguarded and staff are well trained in this area. They are mindful of their responsibility to promote equality and tackle discrimination. This is central to the ethos and values of the school and is backed up by a good race equality policy, disability and gender equality schemes. The implementation of these is properly monitored.

The school is working hard to help parents and carers become more involved in their children's education by setting up parent groups and opportunities to use the school's facilities. They recognise that these initiatives have not yet been fully effective, but the new building will give them wide-ranging additional opportunities and already there are plans for these to be exploited.

There has also been a great deal of work to build community cohesion. This has been very successful within the local community as the school has been instrumental in breaking down barriers between people of different ethnic backgrounds and religions. However, although students have some opportunities to form relationships with people from very different backgrounds and from different parts of England and the wider world, this aspect of the school's provision is not yet well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Very few parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire but those that did were very positive about the school and recognise the improvements that have taken place. The parents that met with an inspector felt that the school is now generally well regarded by the community, stating that while two years ago behaviour and safety were causes of real concern, this has now changed. Like those who responded to the questionnaire, they feel that their children make good progress and are well prepared for the future. Inspectors agree with this view.

The school has recently set up a parents' forum and this has covered the importance of healthy lunches and offered cookery classes to parents. This initiative is very new and perhaps this is the reason why the parents responding to the questionnaire were unconvinced that the school helps their children lead a healthy lifestyle. It was a view echoed by students in their questionnaire. The food served in the school dining room is healthy, health education is planned for within the curriculum and sport is on offer. Inspectors judged therefore that this aspect of the school's provision is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul's Way Trust School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 790 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	44	14	52	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	30	17	63	2	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	44	14	52	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	30	18	67	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	26	20	74	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	22	19	70	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	19	15	56	6	22	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	30	14	52	4	15	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	30	15	56	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	30	17	63	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	30	17	63	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	41	15	56	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	33	17	63	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 July 2010

Dear Students

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

It was a delightful experience for me and my colleagues to meet you and watch you at work when we inspected your school. Thank you for your very courteous and friendly welcome and for taking the time to share your views with us. Please also thank the parents and carers who responded to our questionnaire and met with us. We were very impressed by the improvements that your school is making. Even though your standards are still below those found nationally, we could see that you are well behaved and well prepared to learn and that you are all making good progress in lessons. Your attendance has improved hugely and is now above average. You all agree that you enjoy school and the many opportunities that it offers. Those leaving the school have received good guidance about their future options. Those who need special help are very well looked after. We were pleased too that you now feel extremely safe. Your enthusiasm was infectious. I am sure that the new building will be a huge boost to you and to the community. It was disappointing though to see so many of you chewing gum, and to see used gum stuck to the floor all over your school. You need to break this habit and make sure that no gum spoils the new building.

The teaching at your school is good but we have recommended that some more improvements are made. Firstly, teachers should use assessment to ensure that each of you does work that is closely matched to your needs in lessons. Secondly, you should receive clear feedback on what you need to do next to improve your work. Thirdly, teachers need to plan lessons that help you develop your independent learning skills. Your teachers also need to help all of you develop fluent use of standard modern English as this will be very helpful to you in your working life.

Your headteacher has built teams of people who lead the school extremely well and they have a clear idea of what needs to be done and plan carefully to achieve their goals. Leaders have forged excellent relationships with many different organisations outside the school, including universities, other schools, the primary health care trust, welfare agencies and businesses which now work with the school to try and support your learning and development. They have also sought to find ways of helping your parents get involved in your education. As a result the local community is beginning to realise how special your school is becoming. I wish you all every success and I hope that you enjoy the new building when you finally move in.

Yours sincerely

Emma Ing
Her Majesty's Inspector

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