

Context

Morpeth is an 11-18 co-educational comprehensive school located in Bethnal Green, East London. We have been graded 'outstanding' since 2007 and believe that we remain an outstanding school.

We are a community school and are proud that we reflect our community in terms of gender and ethnicity. Tower Hamlets operates a banding system so we have a fully comprehensive intake but have a significantly higher than average proportion of pupils with EHC plans – over 90 across the whole school, some having extremely high levels of need. Our strengths lie not only in our academic achievement and progress which, at KS4 has been above national average for several years now despite pupils arriving with prior attainment below national average, but also in our strong ethos. Our School Development Plan has only two areas of focus: developing teaching and learning and building social and cultural capital. We believe that it is our relentless drive to improve our pupils' experiences within both these areas that results in their progression to excellent routes beyond school with over 38% of our Year 13 cohort going on to Russell Group or 1994 Groups universities last year. The quality of relationships within the school – between groups of pupils and between pupils and staff - is tangible evidence of our ethos in practice. As a result, our pupils enjoy their learning and are extremely proud of their school.

In terms of attainment on entry to the school, whilst according to SATs information, our pupils are only slightly below national average, from our baseline data typically nearly 60% of pupils start Year 7 with a verbal CATs score below 100 with up to 18% of some cohorts having a score below 80. Similarly, approximately 25% of pupils in each cohort have a reading age two years or more below their chronological age with a consistent 13-14% having a reading age of 8 or lower.

The first area for development identified at our last inspection in May 2013 was:

- **Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by making sure teachers in Years 7 & 8 consistently make the best use of time in lessons to drive the students' learning forward.**

In terms of our KS3 provision, we used the removal of NC levels as an opportunity to review the curriculum and assessment model and to focus on the quality of teaching and learning. We have moved to a model which focuses only on pupils' progress from their starting points so that there is no 'glass ceiling' in the form of target grades / levels. The starting point for departments was what 'excellence' should look like for a Year 8 pupil in their subject and then to work back from there, effectively scaffolding the knowledge and skills required to enable all pupils to reach that point.

Since this was a significant change, we used our involvement in the Peer Review being conducted through our Teaching School Alliance (following the EDT model) to focus on the quality of teaching and learning at KS3 and how effectively our model had been embedded.

"Teaching staff interviewed were extremely positive about the new assessment policy; they appreciate the strong focus on teaching and learning. They cited evidence of impact: pupils are now more able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their work with greater understanding than when levels were in use. The staff are committed to developing the policy further..."

Questioning was strong in many lessons with teachers framing challenging questions rooted in good subject knowledge. In the best lessons, questioning was sharply focused around success criteria and demanded precise responses from pupils. Good examples of this were seen in English, Maths and science where pupils' responses were extended and often impressive in depth of understanding demonstrated.

Teachers are very effective at monitoring and supporting the progress of pupils during the independent phase of lessons. They circulate and check pupil work intervening effectively when difficulties arise with apposite and probing questions and modelling if required. The individual support provided when circulating was in evidence across all lessons seen. This learning dialogue is further evidence of how the strength of pupil staff relationships supports progress.

Pupils talked very articulately and with pride about the school and their experience. They value the support they receive for their ambitions and aspirations. This engagement with school was clearly evident across lessons and underpinned positive attitudes to learning.

Morpeth Peer Review March 2017

We are conducting a further review of the KS3 Curriculum during the year and will be continuing to monitor provision through Departmental Peer Reviews, HOD / SLT observations and work studies.

Our revised Teaching and Learning Policy (2017) makes clear our shared minimum expectations for good practice across all key stages.

The second area for development was:

- **Bring all teachers' marking and feedback up to the quality of the best so that teachers provide students with clear guidance about how they can improve their work and check that advice is taken on board and used.**

We have since reviewed our marking policy (in line with the Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group) to ensure that it is 'meaningful, manageable and motivating'. Departments adapt the whole school policy to fit the specific needs of their curriculum areas. Marking is monitored through whole school and departmental work studies. Good practice has been shared at Middle Leaders' meetings.