

Contributing to community Cohesion

Our pupils form a very diverse community in terms of cultural background and individual special educational needs (SEN). This diversity is celebrated as 'wherever you're from, you belong here' and a continuous emphasis on developing understanding (and where necessary, tolerance) of others' diverse views, expectations and needs. Displays, resources, assemblies, Jack Petchey citizenship awards and the curriculum are rooted in 'achievement for all' as part of our community. One of the outstanding features of teaching noted in our external QA report is 'pupils are immersed in learning environment where they and their progress are regularly and specifically celebrated'.

For many of our pupils, it is the sense of purposeful belonging that has contributed to poor self-image as a learner, and is a priority for us to tackle. Inclusion in all aspects of the curriculum (lessons and planned events/experiences) is a strong feature of provision, from eating lunch, to representing the school at sports events, to play activities. Pupil participation in events such as Black History Month and hosting the borough's Anne Frank exhibition strengthen their ability to understand global issues. Termly reward outings build this sense of community, as do the many opportunities to perform or present to other pupils. Many pupils do not live in the local catchment, or even this borough, and their engagement in their local community beyond school is often a challenge. The school independent travel training programme is vital for many pupils to develop the skills to participate in local life beyond school (refer deputy head).

The high level of pastoral care, curriculum discussion through PSHCE and active cultural engagement/interaction opportunities provided by the school supports the development of pupils as active citizens, with residential journeys culminating in a week in France adding a clear international dimension. School celebration events are very well-attended, as are parent/carer meetings. The annual Records of Achievement ceremony is a very moving occasion for many parents/carers and pupils, presenting challenge and motivation to the Year 9 and 10 pupils present.

Deeper engagement with some parents/carers has been identified as a priority (LMP 3.1) as part of a healthy school community. A recent open afternoon for parents to experience learning alongside pupils was very successful in building cohesion (Curriculum Enrichment & Extension Officer report Oct 08). Future provision of a parent support adviser via the extended schools cluster and an additional home-school liaison role are being investigated to strengthen parent links further. The school's successful deployment of a specialist mental health nurse has increased engagement with families that previously were known to CAMHS but did not keep clinic appointments (ref CAMHS nurse). Additional speech & language therapy has been commissioned since Sept 09 to allow more personalised work with families.

Pupils are able to understand that 'fair' treatment does not mean everyone being treated exactly the same, and are often generous in their understanding of others'

difficulties. The school ethos of demanding the personal best of every member of the community is integrally linked to the school vision of achievement for all. A clear priority already discussed with governors is to ensure that initial evaluations lead to inclusion in the next school LMP and are reviewed alongside other areas of our integrated equalities and diversity policy.

The headteacher promotes cohesion among the wider community of education and children's services providers through active engagement and dialogue from a special needs perspective.

An emerging strength of the school is increasing community cohesion through expanding interactions with mainstream pupils, so developing tolerance, understanding and respect for young people with SEN. This is at its most effective when our pupils can surpass tacit assumptions about their capabilities, most notably evidenced recently in our school's success at the borough wide Paralympics event for schools. We fielded seven teams, six of which contained mainstream pupils alongside our pupils, and the seventh comprised solely of our pupils. It was the latter team that won the overall trophy (and the trophy for best special school/ PRU team). Since the introduction of rowing machines into the school, two pupils have been selected for the Hackney team following their success against mainstream competition. One of our pupils has joined the Petchey Academy football team, and another ran for Mossbourne. Singing and music are areas where many of our pupils excel and participation at community music events alongside mainstream peers is a powerful tool for dissolving perceived differences; the resounding cheers when a year 10 boy with ASD sang the introductory solo for the gospel choir's nig number nearly brought the house down at the Ocean last year. He has since joined the gospel choir, transcending the social challenge of being the only white boy present (not sure how to phrase that!)

A key element of leadership in our community cohesion strategy has been the development of a Curriculum Extension & Enrichment Officer role- a wide-ranging support staff role within the Extended Leadership Team (Tracy, as above). This role widens and deepens opportunities for learning through engagement with creative partners, regular stop-the-clock curriculum events, increased parental engagement alongside the Parent Support Adviser, residential journeys, targeted out-of-school hours learning etc. Our long-term commitment to working with professionals from the creative sector results in them being much better work inclusively with a wide range of SEN in mainstream settings having worked in this more intensive but reflective environment (ref creative partner evaluations)