

Local Authority Guidance

Children in Tower Hamlets usually transfer from primary to secondary school when they are 11 years old.

In some schools children spend three years in Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9) and then two years in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11). However, many schools reduce Key Stage 3 to two years to enable students to start accredited courses, such as GCSEs and Applied Learning from Year 9.

At the end of Year 11 students may continue in education, embark on an employment and training programme or take up an apprenticeship. Over 90% of Tower Hamlets pupils stay on at school or go to further education at college to continue their studies. It is the aim of schools in the borough to ensure that all pupils leave school with good qualifications and secure basic skills, which prepare them well for further study, training or employment.

All Tower Hamlets secondary schools offer a broad and balanced curriculum. In Key Stage 3, they teach the national curriculum which consists of core subjects (English, mathematics, science) and foundation subjects such as information technology, geography, history, modern foreign languages, music, art, drama and physical education, along with personal and social education.

Schools have introduced different pathways at Key Stage 4 which lead to the next steps after Year 11. For example, some will follow an English Baccalaureate route including English, mathematics, sciences, a modern foreign language, history or geography. Other routes might include a broader range of arts subjects or more intensive sciences. Schools also provide vocational alternatives. Within this framework there is a strong emphasis on improving literacy and developing independent learning skills.

Schools take considerable care to ensure that students follow the most appropriate pathway to meet their needs and interests. Students will work towards achieving GCSE or equivalent vocational qualifications in a wide range of subjects, including BTECs. Appropriate courses are offered for pupils with special educational needs.

Students in year 9 will be able to apply to transfer to the new Mulberry University Technical College, or UTC, that opened in September 2017. This is a new provision for Key Stage 4 and 5 students where the specialist curriculum is employer led and based on creative and digital media and performing arts at KS4 and creative and digital media, performing and production arts, health care and health science at KS5. Learners will leave the UTC equipped and ready to go into employment or to higher education.

Schools also follow a locally determined multi-faith religious education course.

Progress file

The progress file is designed to help young people and adults manage their own learning and develop skills to reflect upon their strengths and weaknesses, review their progress, recognise their potential, identify realistic goals and targets, record their achievements and present themselves effectively. Most pupils start working on the progress file in Year 7. The summative document (CV, personal statement, school statement) will be presented during Year 11 and will be used to facilitate progression to post 16 courses both in schools and Tower Hamlets College. It has also been designed for use by employers in recruitment for jobs and access to apprenticeships. Students in Years 12 and 13 in the borough continue to develop the progress file.

Staying on after age 16

All Year 11 students must stay in education, training or work with training until their 18th birthday. All Tower Hamlets schools have 16-19 provision and in addition Tower Hamlets College has an extensive 16+ provision. At the end of Key Stage 4 all pupils have the choice of whether to go to a school sixth form, Tower Hamlets College or a college elsewhere, the new Mulberry UTC, begin an apprenticeship or go to work with training. All schools in the borough along with the college and other providers work together with the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership to develop choices for young people at 16 and to help ensure that there is a good offer for all learners. Students at risk of not progressing successfully after year 11 will receive 1:1 careers guidance on their choices and routes through post 16 education, work with training or apprenticeships from Tower Hamlets Careers Service. Specialist careers guidance support is also given to all young people with special educational needs to support their progress. All students can access practical support on continuing their education, getting employment, training place, or apprenticeship, at the Careers Centre,

There are a range of awards or grants that school and college students can apply for and these include the Tower Hamlets Education Award, the 16-19 Bursary Fund, a Discretionary Bursary and a 16 - 18 Oystercard . Students may also qualify for free school meals.