

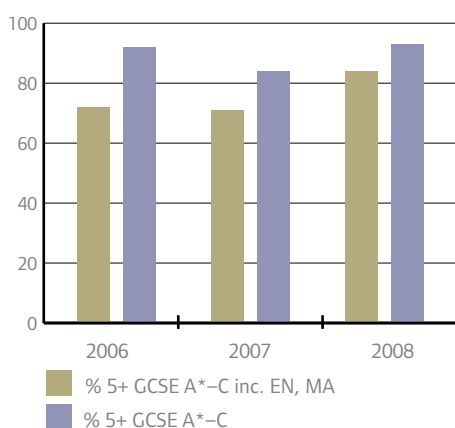
Seven Kings High School, Redbridge

Taking over as headteacher of Seven Kings High School could have been a daunting prospect for Tracy Smith, who became headteacher in September 2008 after spending 12 years in the school, succeeding Sir Alan Steer who is now the Government's 'behaviour tsar'. Despite the school's average intake, all but 17% of students achieved five or more higher grades with English and mathematics last year. Tracy Smith is impressively undaunted by the challenges of her new job. She sees the opportunities to achieve even more and staff are enthusiastic and optimistic about the future under her leadership. The internal appointment allows her to sustain the momentum and ethos of the school while adding her own drive, ideas and challenges.

In the early days, there was a strong focus on consistency and compliance, fairly unusual in the eighties. Sir Alan is on record as describing consistency as 'sexy'. Some teachers resisted, feeling that they could not be given such strong direction; they were told very clearly that they could be. Sir Alan describes 'we've got to take everybody with us' as 'the most depressing sentence in education. It means you're not going to do anything'. There was, and still is, a strong focus on everyone following policy very closely. As the newly appointed assistant headteacher says: 'The difference is that in this school they say the same things, but do them.'

Everyone is clear that the key to the school's success is a combination of excellent relationships and a sharp focus on learning. 'We've tried to intellectualise learning and teaching. We're not embarrassed to talk about pedagogy.' In the early days, there were very clear messages about how staff should relate to students. Staff are still told during their induction that, when on duty, they must speak to at least six students. Shouting is actively discouraged and it is very noticeable how often you see students and teachers chatting in the corridors. Each new member of staff has two student buddies, who look after them and introduce them to other students. There is also a strong focus on not giving up on individuals. The students say that 'you can't hide at Seven Kings'. Strong pastoral care and a pleasant physical environment are seen as vitally important. The site is very open and students are allowed easy access to rooms. One member of staff said: 'Here the children own the school. What message would it send if we locked them out?' Although results have soared in the past 15 years, there is a distinct lack of self-congratulation, and complacency is actively challenged by senior leaders.

School data



2007 data		Student profile
Roll:	1,401	38% Asian British, Indian
Age:	11-18	15% Asian British, Pakistani
CVA:	1,023	8.3% Asian British, Bangadeshi
FSM:	15.90%	8.7% other Asian British
Inspection judgements and quote (Feb. 2007)		
26	Outstanding	'It is a striving school where there is a shared sense of ambition for all students.'
0	Good	
0	Satisfactory	
0	Inadequate	