

# Ayasofia Primary School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Ayasofia is a co-educational Muslim primary school for pupils aged from five to eight years. It is situated in an urban setting in Whitechapel in the vicinity of the Royal London Hospital, a large Idea Store/library and a community sports hall. The school was established in April 2009 by the Cityside Primary Trust. There are 40 full-time pupils on roll from Year 1 to Year 6. Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 are taught as two mixed-age classes. Currently, the Year 5/6 mixed-age class comprises boys only. The school has no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school operates from the premises between 8.00am to 4.30pm, after which the premises are hired out to another educational charity which services the local Muslim community. The aim of the school is 'To provide a unique and balanced curriculum which promotes moral, spiritual, academic, social, emotional, physical, cultural and professional excellence in a caring and secure Islamic environment.' This is the school's first full inspection since registration in November 2009.

## Evaluation of the school

Ayasofia Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education and is making effective progress towards fully meeting its aims at this relatively early stage in its development. Pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of the satisfactory curriculum and teaching. Pupils' personal development, especially their spiritual and moral development, is good. The arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, including those for safeguarding. The school is a very caring community and currently meets all but three of the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory; it is balanced and prepares pupils appropriately for the next stage of their education. The curriculum includes Arabic and Islamic studies which focus on *Aqeeda* (core Islamic beliefs and moral teachings), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) Qur'anic studies, Islamic history and the lives of all the Prophets. It also covers literacy, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, geography, history, art and design, and

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes citizenship. The school makes good use of local facilities such as the Idea Store/library to provide ICT to pupils in Years 3 to 6, and the Whitechapel Sports Centre for physical education to all. The curriculum is supported by satisfactory schemes of work, although they are variable in quality, mainly because the weaker ones do not set clear enough objectives and do not show how the different needs of pupils will be addressed.

The curriculum is enhanced by a limited number of educational visits, for example to the science and natural history museums. A whole-school focus on Muslim achievements in science and technology was enjoyed by pupils last year. The school makes good use of the local park for physical exercise and most Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are regularly coached in football skills by a sports coach from a local secondary school.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Teaching is stronger in Years 3 to 6 than it is in Years 1 and 2. Teachers convey clear learning objectives more consistently to the older pupils and these are used to construct lessons and assess the progress that pupils make. In the weaker lessons teachers do not take sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment in lesson planning and delivery. Sometimes teaching does not cater sufficiently well for the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. For example, in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson, the activities for more able pupils were not sharp enough and these pupils were engaged for too long on relatively undemanding activities. As a result, pupils did not make the progress they are capable of. Teachers generally use questions well to check pupils' understanding, for example about the key principles underpinning journalistic writing in Year 5/6. However, on occasion, questions do not probe enough especially for the more able.

Literacy and numeracy assessments are carried out each term and teachers are becoming more confident in using National Curriculum levels of attainment as a tool to evaluate pupils' progress. Older pupils have individual targets on a working wall but these relate mainly to effort, behaviour and moral conduct. Pupils are not given learning targets and are not informed by teachers' marking of their exercise books how they can improve their work. Most pupils nonetheless make satisfactory progress over time, as seen in lessons, in exercise books and in the school's own assessment data.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good in the vast majority of cases. This helps to make the school an orderly and respectful community and also supports the development of good attitudes to learning. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. Rules and expectations are underpinned by Islamic moral teachings and are understood by pupils. Their self-esteem is developed effectively in a number of ways. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to contribute in lessons and individual academic, creative and sporting performance is celebrated. For example,

the school's football team is part of the local primary school league and their success has been celebrated in the recent newsletter to parents and carers. Older pupils can hold articulate conversations and express their views confidently. However, the school has missed an opportunity to take advantage of this and channel this energy through the formal structure of a school council.

Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to make a contribution to the school community, for example as monitors and by raising funds for charitable causes. Through PSHE, which incorporates an element of citizenship, pupils are developing a sound awareness of the key public services and institutions in the United Kingdom. Pupils develop appropriate skills in literacy, mathematics and ICT to help them to prepare for their next school. In addition, pupils' good attendance and punctuality, coupled with the self-confidence of the older pupils, contribute effectively to their future economic well-being.

Pupils successfully learn about other cultures and world religions through humanities and class discussions in religious education. For example, Year 5/6 pupils looked at the similarities between Islam and other world religions and a pupil pointed out that 'Ik onkar' in Sikhism means 'There is one God', which is also a core belief of Muslims. However, pupils have not had the opportunity to meet and share ideas and views with others from different cultural backgrounds and faiths in order to develop their knowledge and understanding more fully.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school provides a caring environment where pupils feel safe and valued. Teachers build good relationships which promote pupils' enjoyment of school. Staff deal swiftly and effectively with any rare instances of bullying. A clear behaviour policy defines rewards and sanctions and is implemented effectively.

Fire safety equipment is monitored effectively and regular fire practices are held and recorded. The school has dealt with all the issues raised in a report produced by the fire authority, thus addressing a regulation that was not met at the time of the registration. Designated staff have undertaken the required first-aid training. Appropriate child protection training has been undertaken by all staff and they are aware of the procedures required to record any safeguarding concerns. Policies have been updated and the designated officer for child protection has been trained to the appropriate level. Risk assessments are carried out for all educational visits and excursions to the local park at lunchtime. Appropriate records of accidents and incidents are kept on file. Supervision of pupils throughout the day is particularly good. Healthy eating and keeping safe are strongly encouraged through the curriculum and through regular newsletters to parents and carers. As a result, pupils are very aware of how to keep safe and healthy. The school has prepared an access development plan which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

Recruitment procedures at the school are sound. All the necessary checks are carried out on staff prior to confirmation of their employment or as soon as reasonably possible afterwards. Checks are recorded in a single central register. The headteacher and his deputy have both been trained in safer recruitment procedures. The school meets all the relevant regulations.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school is housed in a suite of offices comprising eight rooms of different sizes and a toilet area, all distributed on the ground floor. Five rooms are used as learning areas, one of which is a spacious room that lends itself to multiple uses. Although most rooms are small, the accommodation is satisfactory for the number and age range of pupils on roll and is conducive to safe and effective learning. There is suitable furniture throughout and there are sufficient washrooms, but the very small room with a fold-away couch is a staffroom and does not have a sink and hence does not meet the requirements for facilities for pupils who are ill. There is no playground but the school is close to a public playground equipped with a climbing structure and a slide and sufficient space for ball games. The school makes good use of this during the staggered lunch breaks.

## **Provision of information**

The school provides all the required information for parents and carers. A detailed prospectus provides a clear picture of its work, including provision for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities. Parents and carers receive appropriate annual reports on their children's progress and there is regular contact through a lively and informative newsletter. Parents and carers expressed positive views about the school in the small number of questionnaires returned during the inspection. Most were happy with their children's progress, although the odd concern was raised, particularly regarding the constraints imposed by the small size of the premises.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The complaints policy meets all the regulations. There has been one complaint in the past year which was handled appropriately, and the school has recorded the details as required.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 (the Regulations), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that all teachers take account of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3(d))
- establish a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, and use information from such assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make maximum progress (paragraph 3(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k)).

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that teachers consistently communicate sharp and clear learning objectives to their pupils in all their lessons, but especially to younger pupils
- improve the quality of schemes of work by making the objectives clear and ensuring that schemes specify how the needs of pupils of different abilities are to be addressed.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made)

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary School		
<b>Date school opened</b>	April 2009		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–8		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 22	Girls: 18	Total: 40
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£2,000		
<b>Address of school</b>	114 Cavell Street, London E1 2JA		
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7092 9818		
<b>Email address</b>	info@ayasofiprimary.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mohammed Umair		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cityside Primary Trust		