

Ayasofia Primary School

130 Cavell Street, London, E1 2JA

Inspection dates 25–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- Pupils' achievements are adequate. This is because teaching is adequate, as is the way the curriculum is implemented.
- Teaching is adequate overall, although some good teaching takes place. Teachers are suitably informed about what pupils know and can do, but do not always use this to ensure that pupils make the most of their ability.
- The school provides a caring and nurturing learning environment and makes adequate provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils have access to all the required areas of learning and, in addition, provides suitable opportunities for learning the Qur'an and for Islamic studies. It is implemented in a way that leads pupils to make adequate progress.
- The school's leaders and managers have ensured that almost all of the regulations for independent schools are met. However, although they have maintained the quality of the provision since the last inspection and have recently made substantial improvements to the premises and to the staff team, these have not yet resulted in improved outcomes for pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and show courtesy and good manners around the school, in the local community and in almost all of their lessons.
- Pupils develop as self-confident and articulate learners, and they are well supported by the good provision that the school makes for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (the independent

school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with a day’s notice. The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by all but one of the school’s teachers and one taught by a sports coach at the local leisure centre. Two of the lessons were jointly observed with the school’s assistant headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at students’ work, and held meetings with the headteacher, who is also a member of the proprietorial body, and with teachers, staff members and students.
- The inspectors looked at the school’s documentation, including teachers’ planning, policy documents, records of teaching observations, and the information provided by the school for parents, carers and others.
- The lead inspector spoke to a number of parents and carers and took into account one phone message from a parent and five questionnaire responses from staff. Although three parents or carers had responded to the on-line Ofsted questionnaire, the details of their views were not reported.
- The school’s request to the Department of Education for a material change in its provision was considered. The school has requested that its new premises are recognised and for the maximum number of pupils to be increased from 80 to 120.

Inspection team

John Gush, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Usman Mapara, Team inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ayasofia is a co-educational Muslim primary school for pupils aged from five to 11 years of age.
- It is situated in an urban setting in Whitechapel in the vicinity of the Royal London Hospital and is close to a large local library and a community sports hall. The school was established in April 2009 and its proprietor is the Cityside Primary Trust.
- There are 80 full-time pupils on roll from Year 1 to Year 6. Years 1 and 2 are taught as a mixed-age class.
- Pupils and staff come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, although the majority are of Bangladeshi heritage. A small number of pupils regularly speak languages other than English at home. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school makes use of the local sports centre to extend the range of physical education offered to the pupils.
- The last full inspection took place in March 2011 and highlighted some weaknesses. This was followed in June 2011 by a progress monitoring inspection, which found that the school had improved and met all the regulations for independent schools.
- 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'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that pupils achieve better, by:
 - ensuring that lessons provide sufficient challenge for each pupil so that there is every opportunity to make good progress
 - ensuring that marking always makes clear to pupils what is good about their work and what would improve it further.
- Improve leadership and management, so that pupils have better opportunities to make progress, by:
 - developing further the arrangements for supporting teachers to improve their lessons so that all pupils have the best possible opportunities to learn and make progress
 - making sure that checks on what students know and can do are used more effectively to set targets for individual students
 - improving the way that information about pupils' progress is evaluated and used to help them achieve better
 - enhancing the effectiveness of the way the school evaluates its overall provision so that it can make more effective plans to improve the outcomes for students
 - ensuring that trustees have better systems and clearer criteria for monitoring the effectiveness of policies related to pupils' welfare, health and safety, and holding the school leaders to account for all aspects of school performance.
- In order for the proposed material change to be acceptable the school should:
 - ensure that arrangements are made for the currently unmet regulations listed below to be met.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
 - the proprietor must ensure that suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils (paragraph 23A(1)(a)).
 - the proprietor must ensure that external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people

can safely enter and leave the school premises (paragraph 23E(b)).

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Pupils' achievement is adequate. It is adequate rather than good because over time, pupils only make adequate progress in literacy and numeracy, despite some good progress made by pupils in some year groups. This is as a result of variations in the quality of teaching, and because of the way teachers use assessments and implement the curriculum. Pupils benefit from the thematic approach used for science, history and geography, and some make good progress in these areas. In art and design and technology, however, achievement is adequate overall because pupils' learning lacks breadth in these subjects. Recent improvements in teaching, and in leadership and management, are beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement. An assistant headteacher has recently been appointed to improve the curriculum and raise pupils' standards. Together with the teaching team, she is already actively addressing these issues.

Pupils join the school with varying skills and learning experiences, and initial assessments give teachers a good picture of what pupils know and can do. However, the resulting targets are not used consistently to plan work that matches individual pupils' needs precisely enough, and this leads to uneven progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils make good progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 in relation to their starting points. However, this good rate of progress is not sustained from Year 3 onwards because the teaching of reading skills does not consistently focus on developing a good level of comprehension. Consequently, the needs of some pupils are not met sufficiently well and these pupils only make adequate progress in reading. A new approach to help pupils gain reading skills at their own level has recently been introduced and is already beginning to enable individuals to improve. Pupils whose parents and carers regularly speak a language other than English at home are reported by the school to gain steadily in their confidence with the use of written and spoken English. However, they are not identified in the school's tracking data so this could not be verified.

The development of pupils' writing skills is patchy throughout the school. Arrangements for pupils to rehearse their ideas with a learning partner before writing are another newly introduced improvement. Pupils find this approach helpful, but it has not yet had time to lead to sustained improvement. Pupils regularly receive helpful guidance in lessons and through marking comments in relation to widening their vocabulary, expanding on their ideas and writing at length, but this is not consistent across all year groups.

Greater consistency in the teaching of Islamic subjects, coupled with a well-structured Islamic curriculum, ensures that pupils make good progress in their memorisation of the Qur'an, their understanding of how to apply Islamic teachings to daily life and their personal development.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and their personal development are good. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations and, as a result, they have positive attitudes to learning. Although there are a very few occasions in lessons where pupils need to be reminded to behave well, they almost always engage well with their learning and enjoy lessons a great deal. Most pupils attend regularly and on time. In some classes, their attendance exceeds the national average. This is the result of the good range of measures to improve the cooperation of parents and carers. However, the poor attendance and punctuality of a small number of pupils remain a problem that has a negative impact on their learning.

Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at school because they all know each other and because of the systems that adults follow to keep them safe. Parents and carers echo these positive views. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take and say that incidents are rare and dealt with swiftly. They respond well to the anti-bullying information provided by the school and older pupils are aware of the potential dangers of bullying on social network sites and the inappropriate use of text messages. They are equipped with an excellent knowledge of practices in Islam through the study of the Qur'an, religious education and the Islamic ethos of the school. The impact of this is strongly evident in pupils' manners and the values they demonstrate. The vast majority are respectful and caring towards each other and to adults around them.

The provision the school makes for the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a strength of the school. There is an appropriate programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE). Pupils learn how to respect the criminal and civil law, and the importance of holding balanced views. The school teaches its pupils about other cultures and religions, and how to live in harmony with other communities, through the teaching of religious education, PSHCE and Islamic Studies. They have many opportunities to take part in the life of the local and wider community, and contribute to local, national and international charities. They engage in visits of cultural interest, which supports their cultural development well. Visitors such as the local mayor and representatives of the fire service are regularly invited to talk to pupils. These visits help pupils to develop their understanding of English public institutions.

Quality of teaching

Adequate

Teaching is adequate overall and enables pupils to make at least adequate progress. The school's teachers have a wide range of skills, expertise and experience and all are keen to improve their practice so that pupils learn as well as they can. Some teaching leads to good outcomes for pupils, but there is not enough of this good practice to secure consistently good progress for all pupils in both key stages. Teachers appreciate the new input that has recently been made available for their professional development, but this is only just beginning to improve achievement for pupils.

In some lessons, pupils achieve well. In these lessons, teachers use their subject knowledge and creativity so that all pupils are challenged and stimulated to learn. Pupils are challenged well through probing questioning that enables them to develop new understanding of the subject.

Lessons where pupils' learning is adequate rather than good often have a clear structure and objectives but do not sufficiently take into account the information about what pupils know and can do to provide tasks that match pupils' needs precisely. On occasion, pupils' understanding of new concepts or the acquisition of new skills is insufficiently consolidated during activities because teachers do not check on pupils' learning frequently enough.

Assessment is adequate. It is based on the national system of assessment and relies predominantly on teachers' understanding of what pupils know and can do. New arrangements for teachers to work together to consider the level of pupils' work have recently been introduced. This enables teachers to make sure their assessments are accurate. The school has plans to make this process even more reliable by taking account of the views of colleagues from outside the school.

Pupils' work is marked frequently. Detailed verbal feedback is usually given to pupils on what is good and what might be improved. In some subjects and classes, marking gives helpful feedback to pupils, but this is not the case throughout the school. Pupils do not consistently receive written comments that highlight their progress or clarify what is needed for further improvement.

Quality of curriculum

Adequate

The curriculum is adequate as a whole and results in pupils' adequate academic achievement. It is broad and balanced, enabling pupils to experience all the required areas of learning and to benefit from a good range of Islamic and religious subjects. Overall, it supports pupils' personal development well.

The Islamic curriculum is structured effectively to give pupils the breadth and depth of knowledge they need to arrive at a good understanding of Islamic teachings. Pupils benefit from teachers' specialist knowledge as well as from the daily routines of prayer. This enhances the curriculum well because teachers are careful to emphasise the spiritual aspects of the rituals. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is taught successfully through the Islamic curriculum.

The curriculum is adequate rather than good because the way it is implemented does not result in good achievement for pupils in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. In addition, not enough of those pupils who are able to do so exceed the levels expected for their age. The curriculum for science, geography and history, taught through themes that continue throughout each term, introduces pupils to a suitable range of knowledge and skills and some pupils make good progress in these areas.

A great many enrichment activities are offered. These include visiting local television studios as well as museums and galleries and they help to enthuse pupils and to extend their understanding of the world and their place within it. Suitable use is made of local facilities, such as the Idea store/library and community sports centre. Here pupils benefit from expert coaching in games, cricket and football. Year 6 pupils also enjoy the annual residential activity where they can develop their social skills and also engage in outdoor pursuits.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Adequate

Although the staff provide good day-to-day care, the provision the school makes for pupils' welfare, health and safety is adequate rather than good because of a small number of minor deficiencies. These relate to the policy on first aid and the way in which daily health and safety checks are recorded.

Effective procedures for promoting good standards of behaviour and eliminating bullying result in parents and carers having confidence in the school's ability to keep their children happy and safe. Pupils say they feel safe and trust their teachers to deal swiftly and effectively with any concern they may have. Pupils are taught internet and road safety and how to keep safe in the community. Effective supervision and staggered playtimes ensure that pupils safely enjoy recreation in the park a few minutes walk from the school. They benefit from hot and nutritious lunches as well as a good range of regular physical activities.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The suitability of all the adults at the school to work with children has been carefully checked and the required details are recorded properly in a single central register. The staff are supported effectively by the appropriate training in child protection, which is refreshed at the required intervals, and by the use of a sufficiently detailed safeguarding policy. All the policies for child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour, first aid and health and safety take account of the latest guidance and almost all are implemented consistently. Minor omissions in the first aid policy were rectified during the inspection, and arrangements for the recording of the daily checks that are made of all the school premises were improved. Risk assessments and arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils on visits outside school are undertaken as required. Suitable arrangements are made to ensure the health and safety, and safety in the event of fire, of pupils and staff. Registers are maintained properly and attendance and punctuality are monitored closely.

Leadership and management

Adequate

The leadership and management of the school are adequate. They are not good because pupils are making adequate rather than good progress. The school leaders have ensured that almost all of the regulations for independent schools continue to be met. Their leadership has led to the quality of teaching and the implementation of the curriculum continuing to be adequate, as they were at the last full inspection. Recent changes, including the appointment of the suitably qualified and experienced assistant headteacher, have not yet had time to result in improving the overall achievement of the pupils.

The headteacher and assistant headteacher have a broad general knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, they are aware that preparing a development plan that is more clearly based on an accurate and detailed evaluation of the current provision would provide them with better opportunities to support progress. Improvements in collecting and analysing information about pupils' achievements have taken place recently but these are not yet producing the clear and coherent information that will enable the teachers to help pupils improve their progress. The assistant headteacher is taking steps to support teachers to improve their practice so that pupils' achievement can increase. Although arrangements for performance management of staff are in place, these do not provide sufficient emphasis on the ways that teachers can enhance the outcomes from lessons for pupils.

The proprietor has provided the school with suitable learning facilities, including classrooms that are appropriately resourced, in particular for information and communication technology. The premises and accommodation are maintained to an acceptable standard. However, two of the regulations for this standard are not met. The toilets in the school are not available for the sole use of pupils as the toilets for staff or visitors are difficult to access and so are rarely used. In addition, external lighting to ensure that pupils can enter and leave the school safely when it is dark is not available.

The premises provide suitable accommodation for the requested material change in the maximum number of pupils for which the school is registered. The change from a maximum of 80 to a maximum of 120 pupils can be suitably accommodated in the classrooms and ancillary spaces that are available. Subject to arrangements being made to ensure that those regulations mentioned in the previous paragraph are met, the Department of Education is recommended to accept the school's request for this material change regarding the use of the new premises and the number of pupils on roll.

All of the required information for parents, carers and others is provided, or made available, on the school's web site and in the information pack available at the school. The termly reports of pupils' progress are appreciated by parents and carers, as are the regular and highly informative school newsletters. The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements and is effectively implemented.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	136084
Inspection number	440224
DfE registration number	211/6090

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school	Primary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cityside Primary Trust
Chair	Mohammed Umair
Headteacher	Mohammed Umair
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 March 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,250
Telephone number	0207 247 4928
Email address	info@ayasofiaprimary.com

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