

Mustard School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	204/6402
Unique Reference Number	131438
Inspection number	322069
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Mustard School is a small Christian school located in Hackney, London. It was established in 1996 by the present proprietor, Mrs Faith Johnson. It was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2005. Nearly all pupils are of a Black African heritage. All pupils speak English as their first language. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and attainment on entry is generally average. The school admits boys and girls aged from three to seventeen and there are currently 45 pupils on roll. There are seven children in the attached nursery and one in reception. The school has one pupil with additional educational needs.

The school has a wide range of objectives, based on ensuring that pupils receive a good Christian education. The school's aim is to 'to educate the children with sound academic standards and in the way of the Lord'. The school makes use of the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme, supplemented with National Curriculum materials. Pupils spend part of the day working at individual desks ('offices') using self-instructional workbooks or Packages of Accelerated Christian Education (PACEs). When they need help, they attract the attention of the teacher ('supervisor') using a small flag on the top of their office.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education provided at Mustard School is satisfactory. The curriculum, teaching and pupils' progress are all satisfactory. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good. Parents are positive about the school, which has a good Christian ethos. Pupils are generally happy with the school, but would like more opportunities for sport. Many of the issues raised by the last report have been addressed appropriately, but a few still do not fully meet requirements.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. The written curriculum policy is backed by appropriate schemes of work. The ACE programme covers literacy and numeracy well and this is supplemented by a satisfactory range of other curriculum materials. The school makes good use of GCSE syllabus materials and National Curriculum guidance. There is good coverage of literacy, numeracy, science and technology throughout the school and coverage of the humanities and arts is satisfactory. However, there are insufficient opportunities for sport and organised games. When pupils work on the

ACE programme, work is very well matched to their individual needs (including pupils who require additional support with their learning). In other lessons, work is generally appropriately matched to pupils' needs. The ACE programme enables pupils to acquire good literacy and numeracy skills. There is a good personal, social and health education (PSHE) policy and programme, which has a positive effect on the development of pupils' social and moral skills. However, older pupils have very few responsibilities or opportunities to develop their life skills. Pupils above compulsory school age are offered an appropriate programme of GCSE subjects and the International Certificate of Christian Education (ICCE), which is part of the ACE programme. Provision for children at the Foundation Stage is good and effective use is made of the ACE 'ABCs' programme to ensure that all six areas of learning are covered well.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. The teaching of mathematics and science is a strength of the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage ('ABCs') is good and children are making good progress as a result. The ACE programme ensures that pupils are on a level of work suitable to their age and aptitude and the programme also ensures that pupils have very good independent learning skills. Other lessons are appropriately planned and those for GCSE follow the syllabus well. Time is generally used well, although in the ACE Learning Centre, sometimes time is lost when the pupils' flags are not answered quickly enough.

Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of pupils' aptitudes and needs. The ACE diagnostic testing ensures that pupils' PACE work is at the right level. Regular goal-checking and supervisor 'conferencing' also help ensure pupils are on a level of work suitable to their needs. In other lessons the activities are usually suitable for the age range and abilities of pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is used effectively, especially in mathematics and science. Support for learning on the ACE programme is largely provided through the PACEs. However, supervisors do not always follow ACE procedures, and this means that some pupils do not make as much progress as they should. There are adequate resources and they are generally used effectively.

There is a good framework for assessment built into the ACE programme and the school uses it effectively. Assessment in other subjects is less well developed. Teacher assessments for English, mathematics and science are carried out at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but these are not moderated. Assessment for other subjects consists of accurate end of unit teacher assessments. The school is a centre for GCSE examinations and carries out moderated assessments in the subjects taught. It also uses GCSE results as a measure of the school's performance against other schools. Parents are provided with details of pupils' performance against ACE criteria.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. They make good progress in reading, mathematics and science. Progress is also generally good in English grammar and spelling, PSHE and technology. Progress in writing, the humanities and the arts is satisfactory. However, pupils' progress in PE is unsatisfactory as they have insufficient opportunities for organised sports and games.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is very good at developing pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils take part in assemblies with enthusiasm and pray confidently. Material in the ACE programme presents positive role-models and offers good spiritual development through 'Wisdom' inserts. Pupils have a very good moral sense, based on the school's Christian ethos and the teachings of the Bible. They clearly know right from wrong and have great respect for the law and people in authority. Pupils say they enjoy their PACE work and taking responsibility for their own learning. Attendance is good.

Teachers are good at encouraging pupils to behave responsibly and they are generally successful. Behaviour in the Learning Centre and lessons is very good. However, the school does not encourage older pupils to show initiative sufficiently and there are very limited opportunities for them to contribute to the running of the school. The PSHE and Citizenship programmes provide pupils with a good knowledge of public institutions and services. This is evident in their work folders in these subjects. Pupils have a good understanding of British and other cultures. The school effectively promotes good race relations. Pupils study religions other than Christianity in their religious studies lesson and have a good understanding of the cultural traditions of these religions.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy and pupils say there is no real bullying at the school and that they feel safe. There is a good family atmosphere, which was summed up by one older pupil, who said, "This is a friendly school and I like playing with the little ones." There are suitable policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils in compliance with government guidance, but teachers are not as vigilant as they could be on health and safety matters, especially in respect of science chemicals and laboratory procedures. In addition, safety checks have not been carried out on portable electrical equipment. The school has a suitable policy and risk assessments for activities outside the school. All fire risk assessments and checks are up-to-date. The school has regular fire evacuation tests, which are recorded appropriately. There is a comprehensive first aid policy and sufficient trained first aiders, who are on duty at all times. The school uses the ACE system effectively for sanctions imposed on pupils and a record is kept on '*Corrective Action Notices*' that are kept in a file. No pupil has been excluded in the school's recent history. Registers are kept appropriately. The school has a suitable three-year plan for increased disabled access and progress has been made towards providing information in alternative formats for the visually impaired.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with children meet all current requirements, including that for the maintenance of a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's accommodation provides sufficient space for its educational activities. There are specialist facilities for science and a suitable outdoor area. However, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. Flooding from rainwater down pipes affects several areas of the school, indicating that the drainage system is inadequate. There are several areas where the school is untidy, especially the science room. Both girls' and boys' toilets are unsanitary and some doors do not have locks. The kitchen area used by staff also requires thorough cleaning and tidying. Outside storage is dangerous with metal bars at a height which could cause injury. Several areas of the school need redecoration; the kitchen and the toilets particularly. The offices in the learning centre do not meet ACE requirements as the 'dividers' between offices are too short and several are loose. One set of offices is too low and there is insufficient leg room for pupils. Some areas of carpeting are loose, especially in the science and 'ABCs' room.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents, carers and others. This includes an informative prospectus and newsletters. Parents receive helpful reports each year and have regular opportunities to talk to staff.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has an effective complaints procedure that is available to parents and meets the requirements. There have been no formal complaints received by the school in the last academic year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide more opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities, including sports and organised games (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii))
- provide more opportunities for older pupils to take responsibilities and contribute to the running of the school (paragraph 1(2)(j)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that the health and safety issues raised in the report are dealt with effectively (paragraph 3(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- improve the drainage systems so that there is no further incursions of water into the building (paragraphs 5(b) and 5(f))
- ensure that the school is tidy, clean and maintained in a hygienic condition (paragraph 5(n))
- carry out redecorations as indicated in the report (paragraph 5(q))
- ensure that pupils' offices meet the requirements of the ACE manual and are of the correct size and height for the pupils using them (paragraph 5(r))
- secure those areas of loose carpeting as indicated in the report (paragraph 5(s)).

School details

Name of school	Mustard School
DCSF number	204/6402
Unique reference number	131438
Type of school	Primary and Secondary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 1996
Age range of pupils	3-17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 34 Girls: 11 Total: 45
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,000 - £4,000
Address of school	Parish Hall Nuttall Street London N1 5LR
Telephone number	02077 393499
Fax number	02077 393499
Email address	education@mustardschool.org
Headteacher	Mr Amos Johnson
Proprietor	Mrs Faith Johnson
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett AI
Dates of inspection	29–30 April 2008