

Wisdom Primary and Secondary School

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Judith Charlesworth

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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.^{1, 2}

This was a light touch educational inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Wisdom School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged from seven to 16 years. It is located in Tottenham, north London. Almost all the pupils come from the various ethnic minority communities of Haringey and neighbouring London boroughs. The great majority speak English as an additional language and do not speak English at home. The Key Stage 4 provision for pupils aged from 14 to 16 is in its second year. There are currently 80 pupils on roll, with nearly twice as many boys as girls. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school opened in 2006 and was last inspected in February 2008. It is owned by the Axis Educational Trust, which was set up by businessmen and academics of the Turkish-speaking community, and which runs other educational ventures. The school's managers have applied for both Foundation School status and to be a Free School in the past year. Wisdom School aims to 'inspire children to become confident, respectful, caring individuals who achieve personal success and develop a love of learning'.

Evaluation of the school

Wisdom School provides a good quality of education and meets its aims. The curriculum is good, although practical work is limited by the small size of some rooms and the lack of specialist facilities. The quality of teaching and assessment is good, and pupils make good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding due to the school's emphasis on this aspect of its work and the family-like ethos of the school. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. However, the school's arrangements to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, including child protection, are inadequate. This aspect has declined since the last inspection. The weaknesses stem from ineffective systems which do not ensure that routine administrative matters and documents are kept up to date. The school meets most of the regulations for independent schools.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and prepares pupils well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. It is planned and organised well, and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, Spanish and Turkish. It provides a good, solid basis for teaching and learning. A number of positive developments are due to be implemented in January 2011, such as an increased emphasis on personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). The school compensates for the lack of specialist facilities as best it can, for example by using external facilities and having focus weeks for subjects such as design and technology. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to provide additional material for teaching and learning, and this supports pupils' independent learning and homework. Curriculum enrichment, which includes varied after-school clubs, outings, visitors and residential journeys, contributes effectively to pupils' good academic progress and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies are planned and presented well and include thought-provoking topics such as 'international day of tolerance' and 'world AIDS day'. The curriculum appropriately emphasises the acquisition of literacy skills as pupils tend to enter the school with below average skills. The provision currently focuses on improving reading. However, at times, there is insufficient priority given to supporting pupils' comprehension, speaking skills and writing for different purposes in class. The curriculum for Key Stage 4 pupils is developing well. Thirteen GCSE subjects are offered, including Turkish in which pupils achieved very well last year. The curriculum includes careers education and work-related learning. Senior managers provide helpful, detailed information to support teachers in adapting the curriculum and their teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; these pupils' needs are met well.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teaching is well supported by recent management strategies to improve teachers' performance and pupils' learning. The most effective teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, outstanding relationships and an interesting delivery and content which engage pupils and encourage them to concentrate and try hard. One such example was English work on superheroes in Year 6 which pupils very much enjoyed. Pupils' good behaviour is promoted well, and any inattention is managed very well by a quiet word or a look. New technology is used effectively and, at times, extremely well to reinforce and develop pupils' understanding. Characteristics of less effective lessons include: poor explanations of tasks so that pupils do not know what to do; questioning that is insufficient to ascertain pupils' understanding and inform any adjustments needed to the lesson; and tasks that are ill-matched to individuals' needs.

Assessment is good. It is strongly supported by a computer-based tracking system which records levels of attainment, progress and other aspects of pupils' performance such as behavioural incidents and the completion of homework. Pupils and parents have open access to this, and the information is additionally presented to parents in termly written reports. This system allows pupils' progress to be closely

monitored and intervention strategies to be introduced if necessary. Ongoing assessment information, National Curriculum tests and GCSE results indicate that pupils make good progress at Wisdom School. The majority enter the school with key skills that are below average for their age. Attainment in English remains lower than in other subjects, whereas the standards reached in mathematics are good. Last year, for example, six out of seven pupils gained GCSE mathematics with grades between A* and C. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make up for lost ground at a rate that is faster than average and their achievement is good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is supported very well by the curriculum, the enrichment programme and the school's particular ethos. Pupils' behaviour is good, and often exemplary. Pupils are polite, friendly and happy individuals who develop good friendships with one another. There is very little bullying and harassment, and any that occurs is swiftly dealt with. Most pupils and parents are proud of the school, and say, for example, that 'the school's education is excellent and teachers are great and caring'. The school successfully aims to provide positive, aspirational role models for the pupils, who largely come from a group known to underachieve. It does much to widen pupils' horizons and provide them with rich experiences. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to school and their work are highly positive, and are reflected in their clear enjoyment of much that Wisdom School has to offer and in their good levels of attendance.

Pupils are very well prepared for their future well-being. Virtually all of them think that the school encourages them to do things for themselves and take responsibility. The programme for work-related learning provides them with suitable opportunities for work experience, for example in a local travel agency, and for participation in mini-enterprises. Pupils cooperate well with one another in class and make good progress in gaining key skills. The interactive website helps them to understand the versatility and importance of ICT for their future lives. Pupils show understanding and acceptance of those who are different from themselves, aided by the widely multicultural staff. Almost all pupils say that the school helps them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds, and that they are respected and treated fairly in return.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school, local and wider communities. They organise their own fund-raising events, such as to increase stock in the school library, and raise money for charity every term. The school council is democratically elected and announced to parents in the school newsletter, which gives it real status. The school makes a great effort to organise a wide range of opportunities for pupils to engage in within the local and wider communities. For example, it organises a 'Maths Challenge' for Haringey and neighbouring London boroughs, and pupils successfully enter international Olympiad competitions in other countries, such as the Young Inventors Project in Georgia, in which the team won a gold medal.

Pupils generally show respect for themselves and others and are strongly aware of their own beliefs and cultural context. Their spiritual development is outstanding and underpinned by the school's celebration of its diverse, multi-cultural population. Pupils reflect on their place in society, and on wider issues such as poverty and discrimination. This reflection is supported effectively by assemblies and various curriculum subjects. Pupils understand the democratic society in which they live through outings, visitors and subjects such as history and citizenship.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety, including child protection, are inadequate. This stems from weak administrative systems which do not ensure that all policies and practices are properly implemented and monitored. Consequently, for example, the staff's credentials, such as character references, are not always checked as required prior to their appointment, and the full details of checks are not entered onto a single central register in a timely manner as required. Evidence of valid checks with the Criminal Records Bureau is occasionally not obtained before employment commences, and suitable supervision is not always arranged before the evidence is obtained. This does not adequately safeguard pupils or allow the school to make informed decisions about the employment of staff. Refresher training, such as for first aid and child protection, is sometimes not organised before current certificates expire. Safeguarding policies are not always regularly reviewed and updated. Some do not appear to relate directly to Wisdom School and contain extraneous information which limits their effectiveness. Fire safety precautions are adequate, and the school makes suitable risk assessments of on- and off-site activities. However, the school's three-year accessibility plan, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended, is out of date.

Nevertheless, very good consideration is given to pupils' individual needs. The school does its best to develop a collaborative approach with parents to their children's education, for example through home visits and the interactive website to which they have full access. Pupils' health and ability to make safe decisions are promoted through curriculum activities such as physical education, assemblies, science and PSHE. However, a number of pupils and parents express the view that school lunches are not healthy enough.

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.³

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

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

- make suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school with regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- ensure that an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check is made in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school, and that it is obtained before or as soon as is practicable after the person's appointment (paragraph 19(2)(c))
- ensure that the single central register shows that the following checks have been made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained:
 - the person's identity
 - the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification, prohibition or restriction having the same effect
 - of relevant qualifications, if appropriate
 - whether an enhanced CRB certificate was obtained
 - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, the further checks made which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - of their right to work in the United Kingdom (paragraph 22(3)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the school should devise an up-to-date three-year accessibility plan.⁴

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1

What the school could do to improve further

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

- develop pupils' literacy skills in all subjects more consistently by ensuring that their comprehension and speaking skills are well supported and that they have regular opportunities to write for different purposes
- accelerate pupils' rate of progress even further by sharing the best practice in teaching.

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Day primary and secondary school		
Date school opened	2006		
Age range of pupils	7–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 51	Girls: 29	Total: 80
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 1	Total: 2
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,700		
Address of school	336, Phillip Lane, Tottenham London, N15 4AB		
Telephone number	020 8880 9070		
Email address	Rguveli@wisdomschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Ramazan Guveli		
Proprietor	Axis Educational Trust		