

Date Palm Primary School

82–88 Mile End Road, London, E1 3AS

Inspection dates 17–19 September 2013

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	Good	2
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good or better to enable pupils to achieve well in all subjects throughout the school and so pupils make adequate progress overall.
- The curriculum is adequate and developing. It has not been monitored sufficiently closely and evaluated yet to identify strengths and priorities for improvement.
- The proprietors have made arrangements to monitor the implementation of most, but not all, policies and procedures. They do not hold the school leaders to account sufficiently robustly.
- The senior leaders' work to further improve the school is not supported by written management plans. Leaders have not ensured that achievement and teaching are good.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in their speaking, listening and reading skills because these areas are taught consistently well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and supports their good behaviour and personal development. Pupils develop a strong sense of identity through Islamic studies.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for because all staff work well together to safeguard them in all circumstances and are properly trained to do so. Parents and carers are very positive about the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets 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.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 12 lessons or sessions, all of them jointly with the headteacher. She held discussions with pupils. Meetings were held with one director, senior leaders and teaching staff. Documentation was scrutinised relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, curriculum planning, teachers' assessments and pupils' work.
- The inspector also took account of the responses in nine questionnaires completed by staff and 16 parental responses to Ofsted's on-line Parent View survey. The inspector also talked to 10 parents and carers to collect their views about the school.

Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Date Palm Primary School is a new independent Muslim day school situated in Stepney Green, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It was registered in January 2013 to admit up to 68 pupils aged from three to six years, including 24 at any one time in the Nursery class. This is the school's first inspection.
- The school has recently applied for a material change to increase its age range up to nine years and its numbers on roll to 76. At the request of the Department for Education, this inspection looked into the extent to which the school meets the requirements of the proposed material change. The school is housed in a refurbished building that was formerly an international college. It uses the additional provision of local facilities for swimming and outdoor physical education.
- There are currently 72 pupils on roll, aged between three and nine years. Most pupils have Bangladeshi and Somali heritages. None has a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are at various advanced stages of learning English as an additional language or are bilingual. There are 43 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 18 of whom attend part time, morning or afternoon. Two children are at an early stage of learning English in the Nursery class. There are 21 pupils in Key Stage 1 and five in Key Stage 2, taught in two mixed-age classes.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form the senior leadership team. Four teachers and four classroom assistants are new this term.
- One of the school's planned key aims is 'to provide children with an environment in which they can develop their Islamic identity alongside their academic performance'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to good and better by:
 - sharing the good practice that exists in the school and making links with good and outstanding schools
 - ensuring that staff always make effective use of resources to support the learning of all groups of pupils, and frequently check on pupils' progress in lessons and take the action required to help them achieve well
 - developing the skills of classroom assistants so that they can support pupils consistently well
 - establishing the use of constructive marking and curricular targets to involve pupils more deeply in the assessment of their learning
 - making arrangements for the external moderation of all teacher assessments in the primary department to ensure that they are secure.
- Ensure that the curriculum enables all pupils to make at least good progress by:
 - closely monitoring its implementation and evaluating it to identify its strengths and areas for further development
 - ensuring that medium-term plans clearly indicate how pupils are to be challenged to enable them to achieve well
 - ensure pupils have regular opportunities to write at length and that the teaching of handwriting is consistent throughout the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - establishing rigorous systems to monitor the quality of the curriculum and the implementation of policies and procedures

- supporting the development of the school through written management plans
- developing the skills of the proprietors so that they can support and challenge the school more robustly.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Pupils' achievement is adequate overall as a result of adequate teaching and an adequate curriculum. Pupils make uneven progress across subject areas and this is why achievement is not yet good. They make adequate progress in most subjects and good progress in their speaking, listening and reading skills. Pupils also make good progress in applying Islamic teachings to their daily lives, which is reflected in their good spiritual, moral and social development. Most pupils join the school with levels of attainment and skills that are in line with expectations for their age. A small minority joins with skills that are below expectations. Pupils make adequate, rather than good, progress in relation to their varying starting points in writing, numeracy and science, because tasks that are set do not always challenge them sufficiently. They have too few planned opportunities for writing at length and for developing their writing skills in subjects other than literacy. Inconsistencies in the teaching of handwriting result in erratic progress in this area. Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills because these are promoted very effectively in every lesson, which serves the needs of pupils who learn English as an additional language well. Pupils also make good progress in reading because reading skills are taught systematically and pupils have frequent opportunities to practise them throughout the day.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children make adequate progress overall towards the expected goals in relation to their varying starting points. Most make good progress in their personal development and in reading. Children learn well when staff engage them in play and conversation. However, occasionally, staff do not listen to children sufficiently closely when they use their imagination or spontaneously engage with them in role play. This results in opportunities being missed to extend children's language and thinking skills.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. They are not outstanding because attendance levels are average, and the developing curriculum does not yet enable pupils to make exceptional progress in their personal development. The staff are excellent role models who help create a secure Islamic ethos and learning environment based on mutual respect and strong moral principles in which all pupils can flourish. Consequently, pupils consistently observe good manners and consideration for others. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning contribute much to their achievement. Pupils enjoy school, as also noted by parents and carers. Most arrive punctually in school. They form positive relationships with peers and staff, and bullying is rare. Pupils develop a good understanding of what constitutes bullying through personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), the Islamic curriculum and through role play performed in class and assembly. They feel safe because they are cared for well and feel free from racial harassment and bullying.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop a strong sense of identity through the Islamic curriculum centred on the teaching of essential beliefs, morals and manners, and the application of Islamic values to daily life. Their self-esteem and self-confidence are fostered well through reward assemblies and opportunities to show initiative and develop a sense of responsibility. For example, Year 1 pupils, who were then the oldest, researched last June what venue would be the most appropriate for a whole-school outing, showing good understanding of the needs and interests of their younger peers, and of the relationship between distance and transport. Pupils gain a good awareness of public institutions through PSHCE and educational visits, for example by visiting museums, markets, monuments, local parks and libraries. Their cultural development is promoted through the curriculum and educational visits. Pupils learn about world religions in PSHCE and, when learning about Diwali, the oldest pupils demonstrated respect for beliefs that differ from their own. Pupils' contributions to

school life and the local and wider communities are at an early stage. Pupils have participated in a sponsored race to raise funds for a local deaf charity and sponsored silence to support orphans in Burma. The school ensures that, where there are debates about social and moral issues, views are expressed in a balanced way.

Quality of teaching

Adequate

Teaching is adequate and enables pupils to make adequate progress throughout the school. Although teaching and learning are at times good, teaching is not good over time because there is not enough good teaching to enable pupils to achieve well across all subjects. Teachers share a number of good skills. They use a variety of methods to keep up pupils' interest and to develop their independence and collaborative skills. Pupils consistently develop their speaking, listening and thinking skills through paired and group work, and their reading skills through daily opportunities for reading. All staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently well, and pupils are focused on learning. Teachers have not had sufficient time to get to know their pupils well, but their lesson plans are informed by initial assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills. Where the teaching is good, pupils are helped to make good progress through tasks and resources that match their needs closely. Teachers check on pupils' learning frequently, ask probing questions that deepen pupils' understanding and analyse pupils' responses promptly to consolidate concepts and dispel any misconceptions. Where the teaching is adequate, staff make insufficient checks on pupils' learning to take the action required to accelerate their progress. They do not always use resources effectively to support a particular group of learners, resulting in these pupils making slower progress. Although classroom assistants are generally deployed effectively to support pupils, not all are sufficiently skilled to support pupils' handwriting, writing and numerical skills well.

The staff use effective systems that enable them to assess pupils' learning regularly, track their progress from term to term and make comparisons with age expectations in the Early Years Foundation Stage and national figures in the primary department. However, teachers' assessments are not moderated systematically in the primary department to ensure that they are secure. The use of curricular targets and constructive marking to actively involve pupils in the assessment of their learning is at an early stage and contributes to adequate, rather than good, progress.

Quality of curriculum

Adequate

The curriculum is adequate and enables pupils to make adequate progress in their academic learning and good progress in their personal development throughout the school. It has not been monitored closely and evaluated yet to best assess its impact on pupils' learning and achievement. This is why it is not good. Its breadth includes all the required areas of learning in Nursery and Reception and, in the primary department, most National Curriculum subjects, along with Arabic and Islamic studies. Music is not taught, but pupils have opportunities to sing *nasheeds* (Islamic songs). There is a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and Islamic subjects. Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are promoted consistently well. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to write in other subjects than literacy and at length, and so only make adequate progress in writing. The teaching of handwriting lacks consistency and so pupils make erratic progress in this area. Samples of pupils' work show that last year's Year 1 pupils developed their investigative skills adequately in science and numeracy. The curriculum is taught through an integrated topic approach that makes pupils' learning more coherent by forging links between subjects, including design and technology. For example, during the inspection, Nursery and Reception children were modelling the landscape around Mecca out of papier mâché as part of their topic work on *hajj* (pilgrimage). PSHCE contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. The programme of Islamic studies is built around moral education and practical application of Islamic teachings to daily life, and it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well.

The planning of the curriculum is adequate and developing. In Nursery and Reception, children

have daily opportunities to initiate their own play and to learn with an adult. A two-year cycle ensures that, in mixed-age classes, pupils progress through topics without unnecessary overlap and repetition. Medium-term plans are sufficiently detailed to support the teaching. However, they do not always indicate how pupils are to be challenged to make good progress. Suitable procedures ensure that the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties can be identified early by the appropriate agencies. The curriculum is adequately resourced. It is enhanced well by a wide range of educational visits that enrich pupils' learning and widen their experiences. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their numerical, technological, physical and creative skills by joining a construction, martial arts or gardening club.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety and all the regulations are met. This area of the school's work is not outstanding because the proprietors hold the school accountable for the implementation of most, but not all, of the policies and procedures. This is being systematically addressed, but the school has only been open for two terms. Robust safeguarding arrangements ensure that all adults working at the school are properly vetted and receive the appropriate level of training in child protection. All the recruitment checks are suitably recorded in a single central register. The essential policies for behaviour, anti-bullying, child protection, health and safety and first aid are up to date and they are implemented consistently. There is a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid to standards that suit the age range of the pupils. Appropriate risk assessments of the premises, fire safety and on-site and off-site activities are carried out. All the regulatory checks for fire safety are carried out at the required intervals and logged carefully. One member of staff is trained as a fire marshal. Attendance and punctuality are monitored effectively. Parents, carers and pupils have full confidence in the school's ability to keep children safe. Supervision is vigilant throughout the day. Pupils are taught how to keep safe when crossing the road, being near water and using tools and play equipment. They are strongly encouraged to eat and drink healthily, through the curriculum and daily reminders. In a recent assembly, pupils from Years 2, 3 and 4 demonstrated to their peers through role play how germs spread and how to wash one's hands thoroughly. Pupils enjoy a good range of indoor and outdoor physical activities.

Leadership and management

Adequate

Leadership and management are adequate and ensure that pupils' achievement is adequate. The proprietors, senior leaders and staff have worked closely together over the last two terms to lay sound foundations on which the new school can build. The proprietors ensure that all regulations for independent schools are met, but do not robustly challenge school leaders enough to ensure that the school is performing as well as it could. The school is successful in creating a secure Islamic ethos that fosters pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, reflected in their good behaviour and personal development. The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching, which is adequate. She can demonstrate that teaching is improving through planned monitoring and training. She has also rightly identified the necessity to embed procedures for disseminating good teaching and for staff to observe good and better teaching in other schools. The staff feel well supported in their professional development. The curriculum is adequate and developing, but it has not been monitored and evaluated yet to find out how it can be improved to better serve pupils' needs. There is still work to do to enable all pupils make consistently good progress across different subjects, and this is why leadership and management are not good. The senior leaders acknowledge that any future improvement work must be supported by written management plans and informed by more rigorous self-evaluation. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and appreciative of the 'open door' approach and the wide range of information they receive. The complaints procedures meet requirements. The Early Years Foundation Stage benefits from the support of the local authority. The premises provide pleasant and effective teaching accommodation. The material change is recommended for 90 pupils, including 24 children at any one time in the Nursery.

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/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	139221
Inspection number	422853
DfE registration number	211/6005

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	Muslim day nursery and primary school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–9 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Number of part time pupils	18
Proprietor	Date Palm Primary School Limited
Chair	Kamrul Islam
Headteacher	Sharifa Khatun
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,500
Telephone number	020 7790 3200
Email address	admin@datepalmprimary.com

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