

Olive Tree School

363-365 Lewisham High Street, London, SE13 6NZ

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| Inspection dates | 12–14 November 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 | Adequate | 3 |
| Leadership and management | Adequate | 3 |

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- Pupils do not make as much progress as they are capable of in science, geography, history and art. These subjects are not taught in sufficient depth.
- Teachers use the information they have about pupils' learning in English and mathematics to make good adjustments to their teaching. This is not happening in other subjects.
- Guidelines for teaching physical education and personal, social, health and citizenship education have not been adjusted to meet the particular needs of the school.
- Governors are clear about the priorities for further improvement, but are at an early stage in carrying out their ambitions for the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because they are taught well.
- The checks leaders make on teaching and pupils' learning in English and mathematics have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Pupils and the children in the Reception class behave well and have good relationships with all the staff. They feel safe in school, enjoy their lessons and develop positive attitudes to learning.

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 school was inspected with one days' notice.
- The inspection also considered the request by the school for a material change. This is to open a Nursery class, expand the age range from four to 11 to three to 11, and increase the school's maximum capacity from 82 to 120.
- Fourteen part lessons were observed taught by seven teachers, covering both the National Curriculum and the Islamic curriculum. Three of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, a group of pupils, one of the teaching staff and the Early Years Foundation Stage manager. Very few responses were received to the staff questionnaire. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire for an evaluation to be made.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents. These included information on pupils' progress, policies and guidance for teaching the National Curriculum, and moral and citizenship education. The school's improvement planning and procedures for pupils' welfare, health and safety were checked. Inspectors also considered samples of staff files and pupils' work.

Inspection team

Jonathan Palk, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Callaghan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Olive Tree Primary is an independent Muslim day school in Lewisham, South East London. It is run by the Lewisham Islamic Centre. The school is registered for 82 boys and girls aged from four to 11 years. Currently, 82 pupils are on roll.
- The school has re-established a Reception class from September 2013. It had ceased to provide for this age group in September 2010.
- The school is situated in converted commercial premises. A few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language and almost all speak more than one language. None of the pupils has a statement of special educational needs and no pupils are looked after. All pupils are from a range of diverse ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The school states that it aims to 'build a strong moral character together with sound academic performance'. The school was last inspected in May 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils in the scientific, human, physical and creative aspects of the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that guidelines in these subjects reflect what is achievable in the time allowed
 - extending the range of equipment available to pupils at playtimes so they can use the time to develop a wider range of physical skills
 - checking the impact of the provision on pupils' progress and adjusting it accordingly.
- Improve the quality of teaching further by ensuring that teachers use the information about pupils' skills to plan work appropriately in all subjects.
- Ensure more coherence and depth in what is provided to develop pupils' cultural and social awareness that reflects the school's aims by:
 - providing teachers with more guidance on teaching the human and social area of the curriculum
 - ensuring that the educational aims of trips and visits are clearly recorded by teachers so that they can be checked against the school's aims and values.
- Continue to develop the role of the board of governors in providing support and challenge to the school by:
 - carrying out the planned audit of governors' skills and interests
 - seeking further training for those new to the governing body in understanding their roles and responsibilities
 - putting in place a plan to manage the governors' involvement in school development so that they can help the school check how well it is doing.
- Bring forward the programme to address the risk assessments of the playground and hall.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Pupils' achievements are adequate. Children in the Reception class make good progress in the prime areas of communication and language, and social and emotional development. They enter with a broad range of skills and experiences. The staff in the Reception class have put in place processes whereby they can keep track of how the children are attaining in all the areas, compared with other children of their age. This is helping staff to match the activities more precisely to the children's needs. Some information, such as how children are making progress at home, has not been collected. This means that the adults cannot always match activities precisely. There are some restrictions on how much space is available to store resources so that they are readily available to the children. This can limit how quickly staff can respond to children's interests and help them develop their independence as learners.

Elsewhere in the school, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. From lower than average starting points are above the national expectations by the end of KS 1. The English and mathematics work of pupils in Year 6 is on course to be at least in line with national expectations by the time they leave the school.

The new systems for keeping track of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics have been significantly strengthened since the last inspection and are effective. This ensures that those who are struggling are quickly picked up and the right work matched to their needs. The school runs a number of additional sessions each evening to help boost pupils' learning. This is particularly beneficial for the few pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Additional mental arithmetic sessions at the start of numeracy lessons have helped boost mathematics attainment. The work observed on walls or in pupils' books in subjects such as science, history and geography is not as good. The work in geography and history is not showing sufficient grasp of skills and knowledge, and in science there is a lack of good development of scientific thinking.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development is good. Attendance has risen again since the last inspection. Pupils behave well in lessons. They help other pupils learn well through taking part in discussions sensibly. They get down to their work quickly and avoid distractions. They listen attentively to the teachers and support staff. In the rather cramped playground and the park they play harmoniously together. Older pupils are aware of what is and is not discriminatory behaviour. They learn how to recognise signs that they or others are being bullied and the action they should take to keep themselves and others safe.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is adequate. There is a strong moral basis for how pupils conduct themselves. They know what is right and wrong. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect and take part willingly in duties around the school. Staff take appropriate steps to ensure that pupils are presented with balanced views. A range of trips and visits helps pupils gain a broad knowledge of public institutions and services in England and British values. However, the school is still without clear guidance on how to provide this element of the pupils' personal development.

Quality of teaching

Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate. Relationships between pupils and with staff are managed well and help pupils feel confident about their learning. Instructions are clear, and pupils know what they are learning and how to improve their work.

Teachers teach English and numeracy with confidence. Since the last inspection teachers are making better use of the information they have about pupils' progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy to plan lessons that meet pupils' needs. The lessons move at a good pace and questions challenge pupils to think hard and explore their ideas. In one writing lesson pupils' use of grammar was kept under the spotlight, ensuring that pupils developed accuracy and fluency. The staff, including teaching assistants, have a good knowledge of how to teach the sounds that letters make (phonics). This, combined with a strong focus on checking pupils' understanding of the books they are reading, contributes to rapid progress in their reading skills. In mathematics, teachers have high expectations of the pupils to think and explain what they observe.

In the Reception class, there is a good blend of teacher-led and child-initiated activity. Staff are gathering information about children's skills but this is incomplete and, consequently, the teacher-led activities do not always provide the right level of challenge. Nonetheless, they are skilful in encouraging children to take part, turn take and try out new things.

A scrutiny of work shows that in other areas of the curriculum teachers are not teaching with the same diligence. The work is often the same for all pupils. There is an over-reliance on worksheets that do not encourage pupils to research or investigate for themselves. The marking in these subjects is often cursory and not directed at ensuring pupils achieve more.

Quality of curriculum

Adequate

The quality of the curriculum is adequate. Schemes of work are in place for all the required areas but these have not been adjusted to reflect how these are taught. Some teachers teach through a topic approach, but the planning and the work produced do not demonstrate a coherent development of skills and knowledge. Where subjects are taught as stand-alone, such as in science, the skills are not taught in sufficient depth to ensure that pupils make the best progress. The school does well to balance the requirements of the secular and Islamic curriculum but this does lead to a shortage of time to teach in depth subjects such as history and geography. This has an adverse effect on pupils' achievement and also the opportunity to extend their cultural awareness.

Personal, social and health education, including citizenship education, is adequately covered in discrete topics such as bullying and also interwoven in Islamic studies. What precisely is covered and where within the subjects is not clear enough to ensure that there is sufficient breadth and age appropriateness. There are a number of visits each term to places of historic importance such as museums, and regular trips to the library and local park that enrich their experience at school.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Adequate

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is adequate. The school meets all the regulations in this standard. The school is at its maximum capacity and some areas quickly become congested. Risk assessments have been carried out on all areas of the school's premises, including the multi-use of the school at the end of the day. Some risk hazards of a minor nature were brought to the attention of the governors.

All aspects of safeguarding and safer recruitment are effectively carried out. The checks on staff are appropriate. There is clear guidance given on how to identify pupils at risk, and staff and pupils all know the correct procedures to follow if they have concerns. The management of pupils' behaviour is good, as is supervision during the school day and in the Reception class. This results in pupils being safe at all times. The school's anti-bullying policy is effectively implemented. There is an e-safety policy and older pupils are clear about the risks associated with the use of the internet and social media. Precautions are in place to ensure trips, visits and the use of the specialist rooms are conducted safely. The school governors and the Board of the Islamic centre

take robust action to ensure that pupils are not exposed to views that may put pupils' safety and welfare at risk.

Leadership and management

Adequate

Leadership and management are adequate. The headteacher has built a committed and enthusiastic staff team. He has implemented a rigorous system for moderating pupils' work against national benchmarks and checking progress information each half term. This has contributed to more effective teaching and is ensuring that all staff share the responsibility for pupils' progress across the school. The responsibility for checking on the learning in lessons and the quality of pupils' work is being shared effectively with the deputy headteacher. This is ensuring an honest appraisal of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff feel that they are well supported by this process as well as challenged to improve their skills through access to training.

The newly formed board of governors is very upbeat about the future. They are clear about the school's priorities and provide good support to the headteacher. The school looks to other schools in the area to help improve itself. For example, additional support has been sought from local schools to help develop the role of middle leaders in school self-evaluation. The school's leaders have ensured that all the independent school regulations are met.

The priority since the last inspection 18 months ago has been to address assessment and teaching. While the current programme of staff development days indicates the review of curriculum is underway, the approach being taken is not systematic enough to secure the improvement needed.

The school's website is clearly set out and provides access to all the required policies. There is a need to update the website so that policies match those available in hard copy at the school. The complaints policy meets requirements and there have been no complaints recorded in the last full academic year. The premises are adequate in condition. Improvements have been made to the safety of the pupils during the day since the last inspection, for example, by locking the public area of the mosque from the areas used by the school, and closely supervising the entrance and exit of pupils from the main gate. There are a small number of actions identified in the school's risk assessments regarding the small playground area and hall that have still to be completed. These do not pose a serious risk to the pupils.

Following this inspection, a material change is recommended. This is to provide a 24 (full-time equivalent) place Nursery in a separate building adjacent but not directly connected to the school. This material change will bring the maximum registration to 106. The lead inspector does not recommend an increase in the numbers of pupils using the main school building, which is set at 82.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 134400 |
| Inspection number | 430242 |
| DfE registration number | 209/6363 |

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.

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| Type of school | Muslim primary day school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 82 |
| Number of part time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Lewisham Islamic Centre |
| Headteacher | Mohammed Barrie |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 May 2013 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £2,500 |
| Telephone number | 020 8314 0169 |
| Email address | head@otsprimary.co.uk |

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