

Azbuka Russian-English Bilingual School

Vernon Road, Mortlake, East Sheen, London SW14 8NH

Inspection dates

21–23 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher leads the school effectively with passion and commitment. She is well supported by active proprietors who understand how to improve the school. Together they ensure that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The school's bilingual curriculum is a key strength. It is well planned and implemented. Pupils enjoy learning all subjects in Russian and English; they make rapid progress in both languages.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Consequently, pupils make good progress in most subjects.
- Staff know their pupils' personal and emotional needs very well. They use this knowledge effectively to develop pupils' confidence.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils make the most of the rich cultural experiences available to them.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. The school is a kind and tolerant community.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive. Staff subscribe fully to the vision of the school.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are very effective. Staff implement the school's policies well to ensure pupils' safety at all times.
- Sometimes teachers do not adapt their teaching quickly enough to address difficulties in learning that some pupils experience.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and how it can be improved. However, their evaluation of teaching does not take sufficient account of pupils' learning and progress.
- Although the key priorities in the school development plan are clear, they lack success criteria for evaluating how much progress has been made.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - use their professional judgement consistently well in lessons to adapt teaching so that any difficulties in pupils' learning are addressed in a timely manner
 - provide pupils with more frequent opportunities to develop their writing skills across all subjects, including English and Russian.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders' checks on teaching include a sharper focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress
 - the school's development plan includes precise success criteria so that leaders and proprietors can evaluate the full impact of their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and proprietors have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher has high expectations and leads the school with passion and commitment. She regularly shares her ambition for the school to provide a high-quality bilingual education which is 'more than the sum of its parts'. Staff have bought in fully to this vision of bilingual education and are committed to implementing it in the day-to-day life of the school.
- Leaders know their pupils and their community well. They have created a safe culture where pupils and staff are valued. Leaders recognise the challenges experienced by some pupils in their previous schools and work hard to deliver positive experiences, both academically and socially. This enables pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They are enthusiastic about the quality and range of experiences their children encounter throughout the school day and through the wider curriculum. They value the school's 'dual immersion strategy', whereby pupils learn concepts in both the Russian and English languages every day.
- The school's strong bilingual curriculum is planned and taught effectively. It gives pupils the opportunities to develop their skills through both academic study and a rich diet of other experiences in English and Russian. These develop their self-discipline and confidence successfully. Good-quality subject schemes of learning support teaching well to meet most pupils' needs. As a result, pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- This is a caring school which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils visit museums, theatres and places of worship. As a result, they learn about faiths, cultures and human relationships, which prepares them well for life in British society.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities for improving teaching, learning and assessment to further accelerate pupils' progress. However, when observing lessons, leaders do not give enough attention to evaluating pupils' learning and progress. As a result, the feedback they provide teachers on how to improve is not as useful as it might be.
- Leaders have identified the right priorities in the school development plan, for example ensuring that assessment of pupils' work is rigorous and accurate. However, success measures have not been identified for checking progress made against the key priorities. Consequently, leaders and proprietors are unable to evaluate the full impact of their work.
- As part of this inspection, the Department for Education asked inspectors to consider whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if it makes a material change to the school's registration. The proprietor has applied for the nursery, which shares the same site, to be amalgamated with the school. The building is fit for purpose and provides a suitable learning environment for both pupils and children. Welfare, health and safety requirements are likely to be met if the material change is implemented. Pupils in the school already spend some quality learning time with children

in the nursery. Additionally, leaders have engaged well with parents and thought through the curriculum and staffing arrangements for a seamless amalgamation. Many children from the early years move into the Year 1 class on the same corridor. It is the judgement of inspectors that the school is likely to meet the relevant standards; hence, the material change to the school's registration is recommended.

Governance

- The proprietors are the trustees of the Azbuka Foundation. The trustees articulate very well their firm belief that the bilingual curriculum provides a rich learning experience for pupils. They are very keen to ensure its future success.
- The trustees regularly and formally review all aspects of the school, and provide external support, challenge and advice to the headteacher. They receive useful information about pupils' attainment and progress to enable them to do this. The trustees' key strength is in monitoring the implementation of the bilingual curriculum and reviewing its effectiveness. This supports the school in improving provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English or Russian.
- Trustees have been instrumental in marketing the school and in fundraising, for example for some families whose children currently receive a bursary.
- Trustees are less effective in evaluating progress the school has made in relation to the key priorities identified in the school's development plan. This is because success measures are not clear, resulting in evaluation lacking the required precision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policies are up to date and published on the school's website. They are in line with the current guidance issued by the Secretary of State. All relevant checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children are in place.
- Staff know pupils very well. The school's culture supports a consistent approach to keeping pupils safe. Staff are kept up to date with current guidance. Regular training for all staff in safeguarding and child protection, including the government's 'Prevent' duty, enables everyone to work together well to provide effective guidance and support for all pupils.
- The designated safeguarding officer regularly takes part in training provided by the local authority. Key messages are shared with staff and trustees, and safeguarding practice is reviewed if necessary. In addition, the school has entered into a joint safeguarding arrangement with the free school that occupies the ground floor of the building. In practical terms, this keeps pupils safe by having a joint agreement about the entry and exit points for visitors coming to and leaving the two schools.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping themselves safe, which pupils articulate well.
- Parents are confident that the school keeps their children safe. As one parent commented, 'My son is happy, safe and making excellent progress with his education.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and convey this well in lessons. As a result, pupils engage positively with their learning, respond enthusiastically to support and advice from staff, and settle quickly to their work.
- Classrooms are calm and well organised. Helpful displays of useful information support pupils' learning in lessons. Pupils' learning is celebrated and displayed in classrooms and around the school. This helps pupils to learn in a purposeful, supportive environment.
- Skilful bilingual teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils in many lessons. For example, the use of prompts, visual images and much talk in Russian enabled pupils at the early stages of learning English to learn key facts about the Great Fire of London in 1666. The most able pupils began to understand the usefulness of different sources to learn about history, for example letters and diary entries.
- Teachers are skilful in developing pupils' early reading skills in both English and Russian. As a result, pupils make rapid progress in reading and are able to access the rest of the curriculum.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting, presentation and spelling in both languages. Handwriting is regularly taught. Teachers check that pupils' spellings are correct and that they understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Mathematics is taught effectively in both languages, with a particular focus on consolidating knowledge and skills through frequent practice. For example, good modelling and questioning sustained the attention of all pupils in a lesson about doubling one- and two-digit numbers.
- Homework supports pupils' learning effectively, building on the skills and concepts learned during the school day. Teachers provide regular feedback to pupils, which supports their learning at home.
- School leaders are developing a new assessment system, which is at an early stage of implementation. It is beginning to support teachers to make accurate and timely assessments to support even better progress.
- The technical skills of writing are taught well, for example the use of the apostrophe to contract common words. As a result, many pupils write coherent sentences using correct grammar. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to hone their writing skills in a wide range of subjects, including English and Russian.
- Sometimes teachers do not adjust tasks and activities sufficiently well in lessons when the evidence suggests that some pupils are finding learning too hard. As a result, these pupils do not consistently make the strong progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel and are safe at Azbuka. They say that bullying does not happen, and school records confirm that there have been no reported incidents. Pupils know that

all staff members are always available to support them, including their headteacher, whom they have high respect for.

- The majority of pupils have joined the school since the start of this academic year. In this time, pupils have integrated well and built their self-confidence. As a result, pupils demonstrate self-assurance when working with one another and their teachers. Pupils who speak Russian as an additional language cooperate well with those who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils benefit from many opportunities to learn how physical activity can benefit their well-being. During the inspection, all pupils practised movement and balance in a disciplined way in their weekly yoga lesson.
- Pupils learn to value and respect differences and understand the importance of courtesy when listening to and responding to the views of others.
- Pupils are taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's records show no instances of poor behaviour since the school started in September 2016. Pupils report that the school's rules are fair and all are treated equally. Boys and girls get along well with one another and Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoy learning together in lessons such as yoga and music.
- Overall attendance for the last school year was above national figures for primary schools. Pupils attend regularly and on time, and say that they really enjoy coming to school.
- Parents' comments in Ofsted's online questionnaire demonstrate that they are typically positive about pupils' behaviour. Members of staff unanimously agree that behaviour is well managed.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons, at breaktimes and when moving around the corridor is good. They show respect to adults and one another and are keen to please. In class, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and do what is asked of them. Occasionally, when they are not sure what to do or find their work too hard, they momentarily lose interest in learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The majority of pupils joined the school at the start of this academic year. Pupils are inducted effectively in Russian and English and have well-developed social skills. As a result, they make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and Russian.
- The attainment of pupils who joined the school in September 2016 is at least typical of pupils of their age. Pupils make good progress in their personal development and their learning.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work shows evidence of rapid development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils' books in each subject contain work in Russian and English. Consequently, pupils' understanding is reinforced in both languages; this supports the good progress they make over time.

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge and skills through daily practice in English and Russian. Modelling of the steps involved in solving a problem is provided in both languages; this gives pupils more confidence in applying their skills.
- The most able pupils in both year groups make good progress in English, mathematics and Russian. Occasionally, like some other pupils, they make slower progress when tasks and activities are not adjusted to address the gaps in their learning.
- Pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories during the daily story time. They have access to a good range of books in Russian and English. Pupils at the early stages of learning English or Russian are immersed in the language through visual resources, gestures and lots of lively talk. As a result, they develop their speaking and listening skills at a rapid pace.
- Pupils, especially in Year 2, do not get enough practice of writing in different subjects for sustained periods of time. Although pupils make good progress in developing their handwriting skills, their writing skills are less well developed.

School details

Unique reference number	143048
DfE registration number	318/6007
Inspection number	10041013

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Azbuka Foundation
Chair	Maria Gavrilova
Headteacher	Maria Gavrilova
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,700
Telephone number	020 8392 2286
Website	www.azbukafoundation.org
Email address	office@azbukafoundation.org

Information about this school

- The Azbuka Russian-English Bilingual School is a co-educational school for pupils aged 5 to 11; it is non-selective up to Year 3 and selective from Year 4 upwards. It is part of the Azbuka Foundation, which also operates a Russian nursery school on the same site and a Saturday complementary school. There are currently 13 pupils on roll in Years 1 and 2.
- The school is located in Mortlake in the London borough of Richmond upon Thames. It is housed in a converted church which has been refurbished.
- The school's proprietor is the Azbuka Foundation which leases the building from Thomson House School. This is a free school which operates on the ground floor of the same building.

- The school offers a structured bilingual education that aims to meet 'the educational, cultural, linguistic and social needs of Russian and English bilingual and bicultural children and families living in London'.
- There are currently no pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's website meets the requirements on the publication of specified information in relation to the independent school standards. Where the information is not on the website, parents are directed to the school office to obtain it.
- This is the school's first full inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. They scrutinised examples of pupils' work in a variety of subjects, including English, mathematics and Russian.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the teachers and three proprietors from the Azbuka Foundation. They also considered responses submitted by two members of staff to an inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked with some parents at the end of the school day. They also took account of 10 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.
- Inspectors met many pupils informally and listened to some of them read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school policies and records, including those for safeguarding, in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The school has requested a material change to amalgamate the nursery which is on the same site with the school. This application to the Department for Education was assessed as part of this full standard inspection.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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