

Read Academy

34 Mansfield Road, Ilford IG1 3BD

Inspection dates

30 April to 2 May 2019

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have dealt firmly with the weaknesses found at previous inspections. As a result, they ensure that the school meets the independent school standards in full.
- Leaders at all levels share the headteacher's vision for pupils' education. They work together to ensure that pupils are safe and able to learn.
- Most pupils achieve well in their subjects and make successful progress, especially in mathematics.
- The provision in the early years is good overall. Children make strong progress to achieve the early learning goals by the end of Reception.
- The outdoor space in the early years is not adapted successfully to meet the needs of all children.
- In most cases, teaching promotes pupils' learning well. The curriculum is mostly effective in helping pupils to deepen their knowledge and skills.
- Improvements in the teaching of reading have led to better literacy. Pupils read frequently and enjoy a lot of different books.
- In a few cases, teaching is not planned well enough to stretch and challenge the most able pupils. As a result, these pupils are not reaching their full potential.

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 teaching, learning and assessment further so that pupils achieve well by:
 - ensuring that teaching is consistently good in all subjects and across the school, including in the early years
 - ensuring that curriculum plans are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and stretch and challenge the most able, including those in key stage 3.
- Improve the use of the outdoor space in the early years to ensure that children develop their skills in all areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, including governors, have tackled the school's previous weaknesses effectively. They have made comprehensive improvements right across the school, from managing information to ensuring that the accommodation and facilities are suitable. In addition, the leadership of the school has been restructured so that responsibilities are clear. As a result of these improvements, the independent school standards are met in full.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They have confronted the school's weaknesses head-on and worked methodically and swiftly to raise standards. As well as ensuring that all the independent school standards are met, leaders and governors have improved the teaching of reading significantly. As a result, pupils' achievements in literacy and English are considerably better than at the last inspection. Numeracy and mathematics remain strong.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have used this understanding to focus on the areas that needed to be tackled urgently. This has put the school in a strong position to improve further. For example, pupils' attendance is much improved, and governors have enhanced the way they hold the school to account. Such developments are having a positive impact on the quality of education, although leaders acknowledge that the journey is not yet complete.
- The curriculum includes a broad range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, humanities, languages, food technology and religious education. This meets pupils' needs appropriately. However, leaders and teachers are sensibly working to develop the curriculum further to ensure that it provides all pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education. This work is at a relatively early stage but it is already helping to improve the way teachers plan the curriculum.
- After-school activities extend pupils' experiences effectively. This was a strength at the last inspection but leaders have expanded the range of after-school clubs and educational workshops. For example, during the inspection pupils were able to study the behaviour of bees as part of the 'Honey Bee' workshop. Other workshops include falconry, first aid and fitness. Activities such as horse riding and food technology are also offered. There are a variety of trips to places of interest, such as the Houses of Parliament and the British Museum. This helps pupils to gain a secure understanding of life in modern Britain.
- The personal social and health education (PSHE) programme and Islamic studies help to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils know about the main faiths represented in Britain today. Pupils' respect and tolerance for those who are different from them, including differences in gender and sexual orientation, are especially noticeable. Older pupils talk confidently about friends who are LGBT. The careers education programme begins in Year 7 and prepares pupils well for the future. Pupils are especially appreciative of the opportunity to visit careers fairs and learn about further and higher education.
- Leaders have maintained the positive working relationships between staff and pupils that was reported at the last full inspection. Everyone places great value on the school's sense of family. Teachers know their pupils well and are concerned for their safety and welfare.

- The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school's provision are implemented. Inspectors recommend that the school is registered to admit 228 pupils between the ages of 3 to 16 on the Mansfield Road site.

Governance

- At the last inspection, there were no arrangements for governance. This has been rectified. The proprietary body is now a charitable trust and there is a separate governing body. Governors (known as school development leaders) meet regularly and frequently. They each have specific responsibilities, such as safeguarding or health and safety, and one school development leader acts as chair.
- The improvements to governance, and to the arrangements for recruiting and vetting new staff, mean that statutory requirements are now met. Leaders and governors ensure that they carry out the necessary checks for all staff, governors and trustees.
- Governors bring a wide range of relevant experience and expertise to their role as school development leaders. They have received appropriate training, including in safer recruitment, and have worked diligently to support leaders and hold them to account. This is reflected in the minutes of meetings. Governors know the school well and have a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been remedied. Leaders and governors have ensured that safe recruitment processes are strong. Pre-employment checks of the suitability of staff are thorough and recorded effectively. These checks are used to make decisions about employment and include evidence of criminal record checks, references and, where appropriate, overseas checks.
- Staff have a secure understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection. They receive regular training so that, for example, they have an up-to-date understanding of issues related to radicalisation and extremism, and female genital mutilation. Policies are now also up-to-date and staff have read the relevant guidance. As a result, there is culture of safeguarding throughout the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching makes a strong contribution to pupils' good learning and progress. While there are a few inconsistencies, teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and use this to set work that challenges most pupils. In many subjects, teachers' subject expertise enables pupils to deepen their learning. As a result, the great majority of pupils make strong progress as they move through the school.
- Well-planned teaching provides pupils with a step-by-step approach to learning that supports their good progress over time. For example, tasks are broken down into manageable chunks so that pupils get to grips with a topic or concept before moving on. This enables pupils to build their learning in a structured way.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are positive across the school. This contributes

significantly to creating a culture in which pupils are enthusiastic about their work, confident and keen to share their ideas with others. Pupils' attitudes are upbeat. They speak warmly of their teachers and the help they are given to achieve well. They said that teachers will 'always help if you don't understand something'.

- In most cases, teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils and provide work that is challenging and stretches their thinking. In English, for example, pupils in key stages 2 and 3 use high-quality texts to develop their reading and comprehension skills. In mathematics, pupils develop their ability to use knowledge to solve problems.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Leaders have done much to improve the teaching of reading. While there is still some work to ensure full consistency, pupils' reading skills and appreciation of different types of writing show clear signs of improvement. For example, pupils in Year 6 read frequently and the range of books is broad. Pupils' mathematical skills are also developed effectively across the school.
- However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching and learning. While most pupils are given work that is matched well to their needs, this is not the case consistently for the most able. On occasions, these pupils are not given additional and more demanding work to deepen their mastery of the subject. The structured approach that is helping the majority of pupils to achieve well means that the most able are restricted to completing work that is, for them, too easy. In English, for example, some pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length. This means that their ability to construct complex arguments or extended narratives is not as well developed as it should be. Similarly, when the teaching relies too much on copying from text books or the board, the most able pupils do not make the 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.
- The school has improved its procedures for promoting pupils' safety and well-being. The good relationships that teachers have with pupils help to ensure that support for pupils experiencing difficulties is provided quickly. Pupils are clear that their teachers look after them well.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively. They have a range of opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of school life, including being prefects and members of the school council. Pupils are elected to become school councillors, and this gives them a practical way to become familiar with the principles of democracy.
- Pupils understand British values well. They show great respect for others. For example, they talk confidently about people with protected characteristics. This is because the school's programme of PSHE, assemblies and visits provide a range of experiences to enable pupils to develop their personal skills well.
- The Islamic studies curriculum gives pupils a strong understanding of their own culture and beliefs. In addition, pupils are taught about other major religious traditions. For example, pupils have visited churches, temples and synagogues. In a conversation with inspectors, pupils spoke knowledgably about the similarities and differences between

religions. They said that it is 'ok to be different and hold different views'.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to do well in their studies. They are excited about learning and have high aspirations for their future. Pupils' mature attitudes have a beneficial impact on their learning.
- Pupils are unequivocal that they feel safe in school. Parents, too, say that their children are safe at school. Pupils talk knowledgeably about keeping themselves safe, for example when talking about online and road safety. Pupils know what to do in case of fire and how to respond to an emergency.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves well in classrooms and around the school, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Playgrounds are supervised well by staff. Pupils are mature, polite and sensible.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They also say that if there is any bullying, they are confident that their teachers will deal with it properly.
- Pupils' attendance at school has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is now typically above the average across the school. This is because leaders have tightened the procedures for checking and following up absence. Daily registers and information about pupils who have left the school meet requirements. Pupils are punctual to lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils start at the school with broadly average attainment. Most pupils make good progress during their time at school. This is confirmed by their work in books, which shows good range and progress over time. For example, younger pupils make clear progress with their handwriting and their ability to use simple punctuation. Older pupils deepen their knowledge well and develop a broad vocabulary.
- Although achievement across key stages 1 to 3 is typically strong, the most able pupils do not make as much progress as they should. This is because the work they are given is often too easy and fails to deepen their learning.
- Pupils' reading in key stages 1 and 2 has improved considerably and their literacy skills are secure. This is because phonics teaching is now more effective and pupils know how to use sounds to decode difficult or new words. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they read fluently and accurately. This ensures that they are prepared well for the next stage of their learning.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are strong. The transitions from the early years to Year 1, and from Year 2 to Year 3, are managed well so that teachers can build effectively on previous learning.
- In key stage 3 pupils also achieve well, moving smoothly from Year 6 to Year 7. Standards in English are improving and pupils make convincing progress. In mathematics, pupils continue to achieve well. In science, pupils have secure knowledge and understand important concepts. Outcomes in other subjects are more variable, particularly in the accuracy and presentation of pupils' work. For example, in some books, errors in

grammar and spelling are not picked up.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is led well. Leaders ensure that the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage are met in full.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about the early years curriculum and framework. As a result, children make good progress in the areas of learning and development. Children's personal, social and emotional development is strong, enabling them to form positive relations and enjoy learning. In the Nursery, the range of resources helps children to develop their capacity to become more independent.
- Early years staff are well trained. All adults use questioning effectively in order to support children's learning, for example in developing their early writing and counting skills. In the Reception class, work in topic books shows that children make good progress in their ability to write phrases and sentences.
- Overall, reading is taught well by suitably trained and knowledgeable adults. As a result, children learn and apply phonics skills well when reading and writing words. However, the use of a range of schemes and slightly different approaches means that some children do not make the strong progress of which they are capable. Some children are not challenged to move from writing single words to sentences as soon as they are ready. Leaders recognise that phonics teaching in the early years needs to be more systematic.
- Assessment procedures are thorough and adults use observation to track children's progress effectively. This enables work to be matched to children's needs appropriately.
- The Reception and Nursery classes use the same outside space. While the space is suitable and has a range of resources to support children's physical development, there are limited resources for other areas of learning, including communication and language.
- Children in the early years have positive attitudes and behave well. The school's partnership with parents is positive. Leaders have ensured that there are opportunities for parents to share in their children's learning, although there is scope to develop this further.

School details

Unique reference number	139826
DfE registration number	317/6000
Inspection number	10092523

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	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The trustees
Chair	Gulam Hussain
Headteacher	Gulam Hussain
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3999
Telephone number	020 8554 9111
Website	www.readacademy.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@readacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 to 22 February 2018

Information about this school

- Read Academy is an independent selective day school. All pupils are of Muslim faith.
- The proprietor is the Read Academy Trust, which is chaired by the headteacher. There is a separate governing body that has responsibility for governance.
- The school is operating outside of its registration agreement. The proprietor has made multiple changes to the school, including the age range of pupils, the maximum number of pupils and the premises. However, the proprietor has applied to the Department for Education to make further changes.
- The early years provision consists of a Reception class and a Nursery class. There is one

class in each year, but sometimes classes are combined where numbers on roll are small.

- There are currently no pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school's last inspection was an additional inspection in October 2018. The overall outcome was that the school did not meet all of independent school standards checked during the inspection.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons across all year groups and subjects. Some of these were jointly observed with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at arrangements at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, including governors, teachers and pupils.
- A range of documentation and policies were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, meetings of the governing body, assessment information and the complaints policy.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to the quality of teaching. They looked at the school's website, including information about extra-curricular activities, trips and visits.
- Inspectors reviewed records, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 91 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hook

Her Majesty's Inspector

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