

# Inspection of Zakariya Primary School

447–451 Romford Road, Forest Gate, London E7 8AB

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Inspection dates: 18–20 May 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They attend regularly and told us that they feel safe. School is a friendly place to be. Pupils talk about their teachers as 'mothers', always there to help. They behave well and said that there is no bullying. As one pupil put it, 'We don't do bullying at this school.' Staff are caring and put pupils' welfare at the heart of the school.

All the staff are committed to helping pupils do well at school. However, many do not have the expertise they need to teach their subjects consistently well, including reading. This means that pupils' learning is not as strong as it should be.

The headteacher gives a great deal of attention to pupils' personal development. Pupils are taught to respect others. The focus on pupils' and staff's well-being makes the school feel like a family. Pupils take pride in their school and the contribution that they make to daily life.

Since the last inspection, leaders have worked successfully to improve the routines that make the school run smoothly. Revised procedures for areas such as safeguarding, staff recruitment, and health and safety mean that the school meets legal requirements. Pupils know about the behaviour policy and how to keep themselves safe, including online.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The headteacher has done much to improve the curriculum since taking up the role after the last inspection in February 2019. There are written plans for a broad range of secular subjects, including early reading, literacy and numeracy. Staff have used a commercial scheme to plan the programme for each subject. The plans identify the key objectives for each unit of work and are linked to the national curriculum. This is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' achievements. In mathematics, for example, the plans follow a logical order that helps pupils to learn the basics before going on to more complex work. However, a number of weaknesses remain in the way the curriculum is planned. This limits pupils' learning.

Teachers are keen for pupils to achieve well, but lack the professional expertise to teach subjects effectively. They have not considered carefully enough what they want pupils to know and remember about their subject. Teachers' plans are dependent on the commercial scheme. Plans focus on activities rather than on the essential subject knowledge. For example, pupils carry out experiments in science, but do not learn how to think like scientists. In art, pupils produce different pieces of work, but do not build up a range of techniques.

Teachers use the commercial scheme to check pupils' learning, often at the end of a unit of work. However, these checks are not used effectively to identify pupils' misconceptions. This is because the checks do not capture precisely what pupils have learned.

The school's approach to teaching reading is not consistent. Staff lack the necessary subject expertise to teach phonics well. Teachers use a range of resources from different schemes to support pupils' reading development, including in phonics. However, the disjointed approach leads to misunderstandings among staff and pupils. For example, the books that pupils read do not always match the sounds they know. Pupils sometimes read books that include words that are not decodable. They can read familiar words, but do not have the phonics skills to decode unfamiliar words. Early readers find it difficult to link the sounds that letters represent to their spelling. Their writing skills are not well developed as a result.

Pupils start learning to read from the start of Year 1. Teachers assess their starting points, but do not check pupils' progress rigorously enough. Teachers know roughly what stage pupils have reached, but this lacks precision. Leaders have ensured that help is available for the weakest readers. However, this is not as effective as it could be. Pupils do not develop the key skills they need to become accurate and fluent readers quickly enough.

Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They know the school rules and follow them diligently. Pupils are respectful of their teachers and polite to adults. Their positive attitudes are clear and they are keen to learn. Pupils attend regularly and arrive to lessons on time.

Pupils are given lots of opportunities to develop their personal skills. Pupils are taught about how to be responsible and respect others. For example, pupils sit on the school council and contribute to anti-bullying work. They welcome new pupils readily, regardless of differences. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are taught about what it means to be a good citizen. Pupils spoke excitedly about how they can help others less fortunate than themselves. They have visited a food bank, donated food to homeless people and raised money for charities. Visits to different religious places of worship help pupils to appreciate unfamiliar cultures and traditions. A virtual tour of Parliament has helped Year 6 pupils develop their understanding of British democracy.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met consistently. This is a big step forward since the last inspection, when many of the standards were unmet. The headteacher and her staff have made sure that all the required policies and procedures are fit for purpose. The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. Leaders have a strong partnership with parents and carers. Nearly all parents praise the school and teachers highly, including during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

Governors have also upped their game. They know what the school's weaknesses are, including the need for staff training, and have clear plans to tackle these. New governors have been appointed, so that there is a broader range of expertise. This ensures that they hold leaders to account.

The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that all the required vetting checks of staff are carried out and are up to date. Leaders maintain careful records of these checks. They are knowledgeable and have established excellent working relationships with the local authority's safeguarding team. Staff know the families well. They understand what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns and receive regular training on what to look out for. Staff support the most vulnerable pupils and families effectively.

Leaders ensure that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when they are using the internet. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about not talking to strangers. They were clear that there is always a trusted adult they can talk with if they have any concerns.

### **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Leaders do not have a coherent strategy for early reading. They need to research the schemes available and choose a carefully planned and sequenced phonics programme that suits their pupils. This needs to be implemented effectively so that the teaching of reading is consistent across the school.
- Staff lack the professional knowledge needed to deliver the curriculum effectively, including early reading. While recognising that plans to train teachers have been interrupted by the pandemic, leaders should ensure that there is a structured approach to training. This will need to focus on subject and pedagogical knowledge.
- The way the curriculum is planned and assessed does not ensure that knowledge is always sequenced logically. This makes it difficult for pupils to build their knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that the current curriculum plans are extended further to include the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember. Planning the activities is important, but this needs to include how teachers ensure that pupils learn more and remember more as they move through the school.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134577
<b>DfE registration number</b>	316/6063
<b>Local authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10193516
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	91
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Asif Choudhury
<b>Chair</b>	Moin Khan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Faiza Yassin
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£2,600
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 555 6258
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.iza.org.uk">www.iza.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@zakariyaschool.org">info@zakariyaschool.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–14 February 2019

## Information about this school

- Zakariya Primary School is an independent school with an Islamic ethos. The school is situated in the same building as Forest Gate Mosque.
- The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- The school is registered for up to 120 boys and girls between the ages of five and 11. There are no pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The headteacher was appointed in March 2019. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The last standard inspection took place in February 2019, when the school's effectiveness was judged to be inadequate. A progress monitoring inspection in November 2019 found that not all of the independent school standards that were checked were met. A further monitoring inspection in November 2020 found that the school met all of the independent school standards that were checked.

## Information about this inspection

- We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.
- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about school life. We spoke with the proprietor, the chair of governors, the headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff.
- We considered 16 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and six written responses from parents. We also spoke with parents at the end of the school day. There were no responses to the online staff survey or the pupils' survey.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, English and science. Other subjects were also considered as part of the inspection, including art, geography and personal, social, health and economic education. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning. We also looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- During the inspection, we reviewed a range of documentation, including curriculum plans. We also looked at safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by school leaders.

## **Inspection team**

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jude Wilson

Her Majesty's Inspector



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