

# Olive Tree School

## Independent School

### Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	209/6363
Unique Reference Number	134400
Inspection number	330433
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

---

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Olive Tree is a small Islamic school which is part of the Lewisham Islamic Centre. It admits boys and girls aged four to 11 years. There are 36 pupils on roll with diverse ethnic backgrounds. There are five pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils often have not attended any nursery provision and start school with very limited spoken English and social skills. The school was last inspected in November 2005. Its stated mission is to *'...enhance and nurture the growth of pupils....'* Its motto is *'Knowledge for success'*.

## Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are good and outstanding aspects of its provision, especially for pupils' personal development. It has made excellent efforts to promote community cohesion. In recent years all pupils in Year 6 have reached levels that are at or above what is nationally expected in English, mathematics and science. There are some missed learning opportunities to make the most of some lessons. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare, health and safety are satisfactory but require more rigour to achieve best practice. The school meets its aims. It has made some improvements since the last inspection and continues to improve with the guidance of a consultant headteacher. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and support for pupils who start with little spoken English is good. The returned parents' questionnaires show they are very happy with what the school provides.

## Quality of education

The curriculum of the school is satisfactory. It has good breadth. It comprises most areas of the National Curriculum, Islamic studies and Arabic. For pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage the school provides satisfactory experiences in all the required areas of learning. The use of national guidance ensures that pupils have a wide range of age appropriate activities. This has improved since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in their Arabic and Islamic studies which form a very important part of the school's daily routine. These studies are a fundamental part of the pupils' personal development from the moment they enter the school in Reception.

There is an emphasis on English, mathematics and science and pupils achieve well in their national tests in Year 6. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics but it is uneven over the Key Stages. Pupils make the best progress in mathematics especially where the teaching of small groups of the oldest pupils is challenging, for example working with negative numbers and identifying angles within parallel lines. Pupils write for a range of purposes such as narrative texts, science reports, information accounts in history and geography and letters to thank visitors to the school. However progress in spelling, punctuation and presentation is too variable. By the time pupils leave the school, most are confident speakers and not afraid to put forward their own ideas and views. A current drama project is successful in developing pupils' confidence in speaking, listening and performance. It also provides additional opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in art.

Pupils who start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with very little or no English are given good support and make good progress with both their communication and their social skills.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) has a high profile and good links are made throughout the curriculum, including visits. Pupils regularly use information and communication technology (ICT) and make satisfactory progress with their skills of word processing, presentations, charts and graphs. They use the Internet to support research in history and geography. ICT is also used effectively to help pupils while learning their recitations of the Quran. A range of visits to museums, and other places including a pond wildlife area, are effective in enriching the curriculum and significantly add to pupils' learning experiences. Pupils enjoy these visits. Pupils' skills in physical education (PE) are very limited. This is because facilities are not adequate, resources are limited and teachers' subject knowledge is weak. The school has already made arrangements to use a local sports stadium to provide better facilities.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. There is some good teaching of small withdrawal groups. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils who respond well to the tasks and activities. Good opportunities are given to pupils to answer questions and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, though they do have a tendency to call out rather than be asked. Planning identifies learning objectives and these are shared with pupils and successfully give most lessons a clear focus especially in Key Stage 2. Lessons often have an element of fun which helps to make a relaxed atmosphere.

There is one class for Key Stage 2 and one for Key stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. This range of year groups in each class poses a significant challenge for teachers. The weak management of some lessons means that time is not always used effectively. While teachers have appropriate ideas for activities, the methods used in the classroom fail to make the most of the opportunities for learning. For example, practical activities in science do not always give pupils enough

opportunities to develop their own investigational and independent learning skills. Some tasks are not challenging enough, for example filling in missing words or copying texts when pupils could be writing more extensively for themselves.

There are good arrangements for assessing pupils' progress which relate clearly to national expectations. The assessments are not used consistently to establish clear and specific learning targets especially for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers are diligent in their marking of pupils' work and sometimes make helpful comments, but next steps for pupils are not made clear, especially in writing tasks.

The consultant headteacher is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Lesson observations and increased opportunities for training are helping to ensure that staff are more aware of current methods including approaches in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Provision to support pupils' spiritual and moral development pervades the school and starts with the youngest pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is rooted in the Islamic faith which forms an important part of pupils' experiences each day through their Islamic studies, reflections and prayer.

Pupils enjoy school and their lessons; their behaviour is good. Pupils are certain about the importance of learning for their own successful futures. They are fully aware of the need to create an ethos of respect for each other, which they do. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue. They have a clear understanding of their actions on others. About half of the pupils responded in their questionnaires that they would like more opportunities to take on responsibilities. Attendance is below average though the school makes clear to parents the importance of regular attendance. There are appropriate procedures in place to follow-up absences.

Pupils have an excellent knowledge of other faiths and are very aware of their own community and their place within the wider community. The school has an excellent approach to developing community cohesion and has invited other schools to visit, made links with a specific Church of England school and organised open days for the local community. The pupils have enjoyed these activities and said that it was a good way to find out more about other peoples' views and attitudes and share their own culture. Older pupils have attended the local authority student council and taken the opportunity to put their ideas forward. Pupils visit the elderly in the locality and also the paediatric department of the local hospital. The citizenship programme and visits to the school by local and national politicians give the pupils a good understanding of public institutions. Their understanding of local services is enhanced by visits from,

for example, the police and fire service. Pupils contribute to the wider community by collecting for national charities and disaster funds.

The good achievements in English, mathematics and science and well rounded personal development mean that pupils are well prepared for their next steps and their future economic well being

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Suitable risk assessments have been carried out for fire safety and outside visits. Policies and procedures for child protection are satisfactory and improved since the last inspection. The school links well with local authority services when required. Day to day supervision around the school is good. While the written policies are satisfactory, the school has not been rigorous enough in checking that all its procedures are carried out to a high standard. Staff have undertaken training in child protection, though the designated child protection officer's enhanced training requires updating. The school is aware of this and is seeking training from the local authority in the near future. More care is needed to keep first aid supplies in good order and risk assessments for using the local park need to be more robustly implemented. The school has taken immediate steps to rectify these matters.

Pupils have a good understanding about healthy eating. They learn about keeping healthy in PSHE, science and religious studies and there are clear guidelines for parents about ensuring that pupils have healthy snacks and lunches which in the main they follow. Attendance and admission registers are completed satisfactorily.

The school has a plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Arrangements for ensuring the suitability of the proprietor and staff are satisfactory. There is an appropriate written procedure for appointing staff and the required checks are undertaken. The school has compiled a single staff register with the necessary information included.

## School's premises and accommodation

There are a suitable number of classrooms which are maintained well and made attractive with extensive displays of pupils' work. During the morning the school has use of the mosque's prayer hall. This area is used as a focal point for pupils for prayer at the start of the day and also is used for recreation at break, drama activities and PE.

There is an ICT suite which helps to broaden the curriculum and provides a smaller general teaching space when necessary. There is a suitable area for the Early Years

Foundation Stage, including an outdoor space which is readily accessible from the classroom. However the outside space is relatively small and rather limited for more vigorous or adventurous play on tricycles.

The school does not have any provision on-site for outdoor PE and games, though it uses a nearby park. This area is not wholly suitable because of the uneven surfaces and debris from public use.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents. There are regular newsletters home, a termly bulletin, detailed progress reports and an informative prospectus. Pupils also have a 'messenger book' which not only provides a method for taking formal letters home but also acts as a means of additional informal communication where teachers and parents can write about any issues of concern.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has satisfactory procedures for dealing with complaints.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The five Reception pupils are part of the combined Year 1 and 2 class. The curriculum is satisfactory and has activities and tasks to support all the areas of learning. Pupils who often start with little English make good progress in their communication skills and also learn Arabic as part of their linguistic development. There is a suitable balance between teacher directed and self initiated play. Pupils can choose activities that include sand, water, construction, role play and riding on tricycles. Staff support pupils in their choices. Knowledge of the world is supported through activities such as growing seeds and exploring materials. Teaching is satisfactory. An appropriate range of activities is organised each day and good links are made between a main class theme and the activities available. For example, pupils had been learning about the tale of Jack and the Beanstalk which led to a number of art activities. The class teacher makes regular assessments but this process is not yet undertaken and used by all adults working with the pupils and therefore it has a limited impact on measuring progress and planning next steps. Personal development is good and children quickly become confident in the caring environment. They behave well. Spiritual and moral development is excellent and is supported very effectively by the Islamic culture and ethos of the school. Children are well supervised at all times. Management is satisfactory. Good links are made with parents. The coordinator has a satisfactory understanding of the curriculum but has not yet attended training for the new Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and curriculum. She has though visited other schools to look at different practice.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations"), with the exception of the one listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- Ensure all lessons and activities are well planned and effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used and class time managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c)).

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Develop more rigorous learning targets from the assessment of pupils' work for all age groups.
- Improve provision for PE for older pupils and physical development for younger children given the restricted on-site provision.



# Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

## The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

## Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

## Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
--	--	--	---	--

## The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?			✓	
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?			✓	
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?			✓	
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?			✓	
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?			✓	

## School details

Name of school	Olive Tree School
DCSF number	209/6363
Unique reference number	134400
Type of school	Islamic Primary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 2003
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 22      Girls: 14      Total: 36
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2145
Address of school	363 - 365 Lewisham High Street London SE13 6NZ
Telephone number	0208 3140169
Fax number	0208 6920552
Email address	olivetreeschool@hotmail.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr Ghulam Shabbir
Proprietor	Lewisham Islamic Centre
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI
Dates of inspection	17-18 March 2009