

Promised Land Academy

Independent school inspection report

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Unique reference number	131031
Inspection number	341924
Inspection date	9 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Age group: 4–16

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.¹

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Promised Land Academy is an independent co-educational Christian school located in the London Borough of Newham. It opened in 2005 and is registered for pupils aged from 4 to 16 years. There are currently 19 pupils on roll, aged from 5 to 14 years. None has a statement of special educational needs and none has been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils have diverse cultural heritages and all have English as their first language. The school is part of the Christian Education Europe (CEE) network. It uses the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum supplemented by other subjects taught in the afternoon. It is a requirement of entry that the families of the pupils are Christians and a high level of involvement is expected from parents.

The school seeks to '*glorify God by preparing students for a useful and productive Christ-like life by providing a Bible-based education with a staff who are committed Christians.*' It was last inspected in December 2006.

Evaluation of the school

Promised Land Academy continues to provide a satisfactory quality of education and meets its aims. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features and pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The school has made satisfactory improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment since the last inspection, which enables pupils to make at least satisfactory progress overall and good progress in ACE subjects. However, its provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety has minor weaknesses and is now only satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory and the school complies with all but one of the regulations for independent schools. The school will also need to ensure that it complies with all the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage when it admits children under the age of five years.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has maintained its good features and improved its enrichment programme since the last inspection. However, weaknesses in the planning of non-ACE subjects remain to be addressed. Its strengths are its breadth, balance and provision for pupils' personal development. Its breadth encompasses a core of mathematics, science, social studies, word building, literature and Bible studies, cemented by well-planned cross-curricular links in the ACE curriculum and a wide range of subjects taught through afternoon activities. The 'ABC' programme provides the younger pupils with a solid foundation for the ACE curriculum. The ACE learning programme is constructed in such a way that pupils progress through bite-size pieces of curriculum called PACEs (packets of accelerated Christian education), at the same rate across all subject areas, resulting in a balance of knowledge and skills between subject areas. Pupils also experience a balance of approach to learning between the rigidity of the ACE learning style in the morning and the wide range of methods used in the afternoon. The ACE curriculum is planned rigorously to enable pupils to understand the learning objectives of each PACE and to progress in a measurable way in their knowledge and skills. The programme of educational visits has been much widened through the participation of visiting experts. Sessions led by a jewellery maker, an artist, a doctor, a barrister and a chicken farmer enrich pupils' learning experiences.

The planning of non-ACE subjects has improved since the last inspection, although it is still insufficiently detailed to ensure that the learning objectives match closely the needs of individual pupils. In addition, there are missed opportunities to plan afternoon activities that enhance what pupils learn in the morning. For example, the headteacher, who is the 'supervisor,' has identified that some pupils would benefit from more practical work to deepen their understanding in mathematics and science. However, the senior leaders' self-review does not translate into a written strategic plan to bring about secure improvement.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall because of satisfactory planning and assessment in the non-ACE subjects. However, significant improvement in assessment in the ACE curriculum since the last inspection enables most pupils to make good progress in the ACE subjects. The supervisor and monitors exercise the utmost vigilance to ensure that learners build a solid knowledge base by insisting that they master at least 80% of the bite size before being allowed to move on to the next step. By scoring their own work and then discussing the outcomes with the supervisor, pupils gain a good understanding of what they have to do next to improve. Diagnostic entry assessments inform staff of pupils' prior attainments. The supervisor has improved the recording of ongoing assessments since the last inspection: more detailed daily notes enable staff to identify pupils' individual gaps sooner, involve pupils in setting daily goals that meet their needs more effectively and monitor their progress more rigorously. This has contributed to accelerating the

progress of most pupils. Furthermore, the supervisor sets challenging targets which motivate pupils to progress at the rate of which they are capable. Provision for basic skills is good across the age range, particularly in reading, writing and numeracy, and pupils achieve well in these subject areas. A gifted 13-year-old pupil is working at a level expected of 16-year-olds towards the general level of the International Certificate of Christian Education. The assessment of pupils' performance in non-ACE subjects is not as rigorous but it is developing to give a more informed picture of the rate of progress made by pupils. From the outcomes seen, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their information and communication technology (ICT) and linguistic skills.

Parents are closely involved in their children's learning through continuous dialogue with the senior leaders, volunteering as monitors or 'expert' session leaders and through homework. Homework can include practical work that builds well on pupils' theoretical knowledge. While parents are formally informed of their children's progress in the ACE curriculum through termly meetings and detailed annual reports, they receive verbal feedback only about their children's progress in non-ACE subjects.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and has improved in some aspects since the last inspection. Their spiritual and moral development is outstanding, as clearly reflected in their outstanding behaviour and attitude to learning. The God-centred education they receive gives them constant opportunities to place action within a spiritual perspective, for example through discussions on the 'thought for the week' and character traits. Their spiritual development is nurtured well by daily opportunities for reflection and prayer.

Pupils' social development is good, underpinned by mutual respect. They play and work harmoniously together. They relish opportunities for group work and demonstrate a good ability to work with peers of different ages. They are self-confident and self-assured when talking to visitors and are well-mannered. The ACE social studies programme includes a good range of information on British institutions. Pupils contribute to their local community, for example by helping paint the walls of the mission church. The school has plans in hand to provide pupils with more opportunities to contribute at both local and global levels and take on more responsibility.

Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved in its multicultural dimension but is still satisfactory. Pupils learn about world religions through social studies. Through the institution of a cultural awareness week planned every term, they learn about the clothing, food and main features of diverse cultures. The older pupils attend CEE conventions where they can enter competitions. Pupils have opportunities to learn conversational French, engage in drama and singing and make two- and three-dimensional things. However, their knowledge is not extended further through

studying art, music and literature from a wide range of cultures. For example, painting a still life did not extend into studying famous artists and emulating a chosen style during a later session.

Pupils enjoy their education and their attendance is good. The curriculum equips them with good basic skills that prepare them well for their future. Through the ACE learning style, pupils develop high levels of independence and self-discipline. They develop an increasingly accurate capacity for reflection on their performance, take responsibility for their own learning and manage their time efficiently. Through the afternoon activities, they develop team work, communication, problem-solving and creative thinking skills and are encouraged to have high aspirations. Pupils aged eight to 14 years recently prepared a PowerPoint presentation on a subject of their choice, modelling a workplace scenario. A pupil chose to inform her 'colleagues' about how to care for diabetic patients.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school provides satisfactorily for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The arrangements for safeguarding children are satisfactory and the recruitment procedures comply with the latest guidance. The proprietor has compiled a central register that enables her to monitor that all the required checks are carried out on adults who have regular contact with children. However, the policies and procedures for child protection are insufficiently detailed to give clear guidance to staff. The designated person for child protection has recently updated his training and other staff are about to refresh theirs. The school implements effectively essential policies aimed at minimising health and safety risks to pupils and adults. However, it has only recently started to address minor weaknesses in its fire safety procedures.

Pupils feel very safe and well cared for, and report that bullying is rare. They have access to water and fruit, and enjoy lunch as a happy social occasion. They have plenty of physical exercise and many walk to school.

The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

No judgement can be made on the overall effectiveness and leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage as there are no children in the age range this academic year. The school follows the ACE kindergarten curriculum that provides a range of suitable opportunities for linking sounds and letters, counting, recognition and writing of numbers and knowledge of the world. Analysis of records related to the few children who were of Reception age last year shows that these children achieved well and made good progress in literacy, numeracy and personal development. Provision for the children's personal development and well-being is good, based upon observation and discussion with slightly older children who enjoy school, behave extremely well

and have positive attitudes. Fruit breaks during the morning help to promote the children's healthy eating habits, but children do not have free access to outdoor play to support their physical development. The curriculum does not cover all the required areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage sufficiently, particularly in creative and physical development. There is provision for some creative work and the children have two planned physical education lessons each week in addition to daily playtimes. However, the children's learning in these two areas is limited as the school does not provide sufficient stimulating and practical experiences, for example play using resources such as sand, water, role play and malleable materials and free access to an outdoor play area. Staff make informal notes about the children's skills which help them write their reports to parents, but this information is not used to plan activities to match the children's needs and learning abilities or with reference to the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. The school's systems promote the welfare, health and safety of children in the school satisfactorily.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare policies and procedures to safeguard pupils that are sufficiently detailed to give clear guidance to staff (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

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:

- further develop the schemes of work for non-ACE subjects so that learning objectives are planned in sufficient detail to meet the needs of individual pupils closely
- structure the assessment of pupils' learning in non-ACE subjects so as to form a clear picture of their progress that can then be communicated formally to parents
- ensure that it will meet all the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework when it admits pupils under the age of five years
- formalise its self-evaluation into a strategic plan to bring about secure improvement.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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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			✓	
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to make judgements in Early Years Foundation Stage.

The quality of boarding provision *(leave blank if not applicable)*

Evaluation of boarding provision				
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School details

Name of school	PromisedLand Academy
DCSF number	316/6068
Unique reference number	131031
Type of school	Christian day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	2005
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	Boys: 8 Girls: 11 Total: 19
Annual fees	£2,940 for the first child; £2,400 for the second child; £2,100 for the third child
Address of school	St Cedd's Hall Foster Road (off Whitwell Road) Plaistow London E13 8SR
Telephone number	020 7473 3229
Email address	admin@promisedlandacademy.org.uk
Headteacher	Mr Allan Coote
Proprietor	Mrs Shirley Coote
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Date of inspection	9 October 2009