

Ayesha Community Education

Independent school inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², 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

Ayesha Community Education (ACE) serves the educational needs of the Muslim communities of north London. It admits pupils from 4 to 16 years of age and there are currently 239 pupils on roll, of whom 20 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are no children receiving nursery funding. There is a wide mix of cultures and nationalities amongst both pupils and staff. Twenty one pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. The school opened in 2006 and the numbers on roll increased more than four-fold when it moved to its present, much larger, buildings in August 2009. These buildings were formerly used as a primary school by the local authority and, more recently, by a college. The educational provision is a mix of Islamic and secular teaching. The school aims to 'provide a balanced quality education in a caring and nurturing environment with a view to creating responsible citizens of the future'. The school was last inspected in June 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Ayesha Community Education provides an inadequate quality of education as it does not meet a number of important regulations for independent schools. The school's aims are not being met. The overall provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate primarily because safeguarding procedures are incomplete. This failure to properly safeguard pupils means that the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate, although the outcomes for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The curricular provision is inadequate for those who are at the early stages of acquiring English and satisfactory for other pupils. Teaching is satisfactory, as is pupils' progress; however, systems to monitor the progress of pupils are not yet fully developed and this sometimes affects the progress they make in lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is considered an extremely important part of the school's provision by both the school and parents and carers. The dramatic increase in the number of pupils on roll has led to a decline in the quality of education provided since it was last inspected.

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

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education and the curriculum are inadequate, as the needs of a significant number of pupils who are at the early stages of acquiring English are not met. The school does not make appropriate curricular arrangements for such pupils. There is a broad and balanced curriculum for other pupils. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides appropriate activities to develop children's physical, mobility and self-help skills. Their communication skills are also developed. The curriculum policy specifies subjects to be taught and methods to be used. Planning for the National Curriculum and Islamic curriculum continues to be developed and the school has started to plan the curriculum through a thematic approach, although this is not yet fully implemented. The curriculum is adequately resourced but the school is aware that further resources are sought by teachers.

All of the required areas of learning are covered. Pupils are prepared to study for examinations in Arabic, design and technology, religious studies, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, English, science, citizenship and geography by the time they reach Year 11. Lessons on the Quran are also taught. Current Year 11 pupils have already taken examinations in religious studies and Arabic.

There is no overall programme for the development of personal, social and health education. However, elements are taught through Islamic studies and citizenship and are supplemented further by circle time and assemblies. Visits to places of interest enhance the experiences offered by the curriculum but are not connected to the curriculum in a planned way. Parents feel that these visits should be offered more frequently and inspectors are in agreement. Careers guidance provided to pupils is satisfactory, as are opportunities to experience the world of work.

The quality of teaching and assessment is inadequate overall as a result of weaknesses in assessment. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with examples of both good and inadequate practice seen during the inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall but pupils who are at the early stages of acquiring English are not making enough progress. In the better lessons, teachers use stimulating materials to motivate and engage the pupils and lively debate is encouraged through incisive questioning. In less successful lessons, teachers have not assessed what pupils can and cannot do, and work is not always matched sufficiently well to the needs of individual pupils, who consequently make inadequate progress. The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and leads to good progress. However, the skills of assessing children in relation to the early learning goals are as yet insufficiently developed.

The school does not assess and record pupils' progress effectively. Teachers set regular tests but the practice of keeping useful records to inform the planning of future teaching is not consistent. The systems for assessing pupils' learning and for monitoring their progress are not rigorous enough to inform the school of how best

to improve the teaching and learning. However, newly appointed leadership has recently started the process of harmonising assessment and target setting across the primary age range and this is expected to extend into the secondary section. The school also intends to soon introduce tests which will standardise performance against national norms.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and owes much to the school's strong Islamic ethos from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. Regular prayers, assemblies and the attention given to the pupils' spiritual development is a powerful influence on their successful acquisition of a clear and secure set of values and beliefs.

The school's clear behaviour policy and code of conduct provide an effective framework for pupils to learn to take responsibility for their actions and distinguish right from wrong. The good relationships between staff and pupils demonstrate further key values, particularly respect for one another. Pupils' attendance and behaviour are good.

There is a feeling of community in the school. This is shared equally by staff and pupils, who relate well to one another. This contributes to the effective provision for the pupils' social development. Pupils partake in activities that raise money for a variety of charitable causes such as raising a significant amount of money for the orphans of the Haiti earthquake.

The school provides satisfactory opportunities to promote the pupils' cultural development and their appreciation of cultural diversity, while providing an appreciation of this country's culture. It is the school's policy to encourage the sharing of cultural traditions by holding an annual international fair with traditional food and entertainment from a variety of ethnic and national backgrounds. Pupils' knowledge and awareness of British public services and institutions is satisfactory.

Pupils fully appreciate their own culture and their respect and tolerance of other cultural traditions is evident in their dealings with adults who either work in or visit the school. Members of the Jewish and Christian community have visited the school. Pupils also develop a sense of tolerance and community through their work in Islamic studies and citizenship.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall quality of the welfare, health and safety of the pupils in the school and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate because the policies aimed at safeguarding pupils in all circumstances are not implemented rigorously. Essential elements of policies relating to the safe recruitment of staff are not adequately followed. The designated person responsible for child protection has not

received the necessary updated child protection training. The first aid training necessary to meet the needs of the youngest pupils has not been undertaken. Other arrangements to ensure the safety of the premises and the pupils are satisfactory. The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy and pupils feel safe knowing who to turn to should a problem arise. The school has a satisfactory policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on educational visits and fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. Admission and attendance registers are kept in accordance with regulations. Pupils are taught to stay healthy and take regular exercise.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school does not have sufficiently rigorous staff recruitment procedures in place. Consequently, it does not meet the regulations for carrying out the required checks on all those connected to the school prior to their appointment, including some statutory checks by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to confirm that staff are suitable to work with children. The statutory single central register of all checks is not maintained. These issues are now being addressed as a matter of urgency.

School's premises and accommodation

ACE occupies the buildings of a former primary school, used recently by a college. The buildings comprise a block used by the primary section and another block used by the secondary section. Suitable modular buildings are used to teach the Reception class and pupils at the early stages of acquiring English. The school moved into its present premises at the start of the academic year and has made considerable improvements to the fabric of the building. There are further improvements planned to improve the quality of the present accommodation, as, for example, pupils have access to an ageing ICT suite. The classrooms are spacious for the number of pupils taught in them. The learning environment is enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. There are adequate washroom facilities and the flooring is in a satisfactory condition.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

A wide range of information is made available to parents, carers and others. However, the school does not provide parents and carers with particulars of educational and welfare provision for those pupils who are at the early stages of acquiring English.

Most parents and carers returned their questionnaires to the reporting inspector. A third expressed a variety of concerns about the quality of education their child was receiving. In particular, parents and carers expressed dissatisfaction that the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns.

Reports regarding pupils' progress are made available to parents and carers. Parents and carers also have opportunities to meet teachers during parents' and carers' evenings.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's policy and procedures for handling complaints meet all of the requirements. The school reported that it has received no formal complaints in the preceding school year.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, its overall quality of provision and the quality of its leadership and management are inadequate because checks on all staff are incomplete. The outcomes for children, however, are satisfactory.

Children enjoy their lessons and are keen to take part and ask questions. They are encouraged to think critically and develop their creative skills. Good teaching leads to good progress for the majority of children. Children are encouraged to adopt safe practices, and many of the displays have a theme of personal safety. Fresh fruit is available at break times and many of the activities involve fresh produce, such as the 'Buttercups Fruit and Vegetable Shop'.

Children fully engage in their lessons and the majority are keen to answer questions and make observations. Behaviour in the setting is good, as children are polite and respectful and demonstrate a wide range of social skills appropriate to their age.

The quality of the learning environment indoors is satisfactory, but resources are limited. The outdoor learning environment is less developed. At this stage of the setting's development, assessment is not yet fully used to inform planning. There are planned and purposeful play activities that enable children to explore indoors, with a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Safeguarding does not meet requirements, although key persons promote the day-to-day welfare of children and teach them to keep healthy and safe.

Staff understand the need to develop skills to assess progress in relation to the early learning goals.

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 those listed below.³

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

- establish appropriate plans and schemes of work and implement them effectively (paragraph 1(2))
- provide the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i))
- ensure that teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- ensure that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and ensure that information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

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

- ensure that all staff have received up-to-date child protection training (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that staff have received suitable first aid training to assist the youngest pupils (paragraph 3(6)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their identity, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references, and take such information into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- ensure that an enhanced criminal record check is made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school and ensure that the enhanced criminal record certificate which is the subject of

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

the application is obtained before or as soon as is practicable after his/her appointment (paragraph 4(2)(b))

- ensure that in relation to each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007, the register shows checks made (and certificates obtained where relevant) of: his/her identity; whether an enhanced CRB was obtained; the right to work in the UK, and where relevant for those who have lived outside the UK, suitability to work in a school; ensure that the register includes the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2 and 3)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(3)(b)).

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

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?			✓	
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?				✓
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?				✓
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?				✓

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school	Ayesha Community Education		
DCSF number	302/6119		
Unique reference number (URN)	131261		
Type of school	Faith School (Islamic)		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1 March 2006		
Age range of pupils	4-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 50	Girls: 189	Total: 239
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,650		
Address of school	10A Montagu Rd Hendon London NW4 3ES		
Telephone number	020 8203 8446		
Fax number	020 3137 8446		
Email address	info@ayeshas.org		
Headteacher	Mr Shakil Ahmed		
Proprietor	Mr Shakil Ahmed		
Reporting inspector	Israr Khan		
Dates of inspection	25-26 February 2010		