

Oakwood Primary School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

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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 Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Oakwood Primary School is an independent day Muslim primary school that opened in April 2008. The school is registered to admit up to 150 boys and girls aged from three to 11 years of any religious background. It is situated in a quiet, residential part of central Luton and housed in a large, 1930s two-storied property with a playground at the rear. Pupils come from diverse cultural backgrounds and are mostly of Pakistani and Bengali heritages. Most speak English as an additional language or are bilingual. There are two pupils of compulsory school age at an early stage of learning English. There are currently 104 pupils on roll, 84 of whom attend full time. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Nursery class of 20 children and a Reception class of 17 children. The Nursery children all attend part time. There are 35 children in receipt of the government's nursery education funding. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school is managed by a board of trustees that includes the headteacher who is one of the founders of the school. The headteacher has very recently returned to his post following an absence of eighteen months. The school had its first full inspection in July 2009.

The school seeks to help its pupils towards achieving an understanding of their own faith, and the role of Islam in their lives, and to teach most National Curriculum subjects, along with Arabic, Islamic and Qur'anic studies. The school aims to be an inclusive school that welcomes pupils from all backgrounds and abilities, and promotes moral and academic excellence, while developing their spiritual needs.

Evaluation of the school

Oakwood Primary provides a good quality of education from Nursery to Year 6 and meets its stated aims. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and the main school, pupils make good progress over time as a result of good teaching and a good curriculum. While pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, their spiritual and moral development is outstanding and reflected in their outstanding behaviour. The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The school has greatly improved

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

its policies and procedures since the last inspection and now meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The good curriculum has significant strengths in that it serves the needs of all pupils, equips pupils with good basic skills that prepare them well for their future and supports their personal development well. In the Nursery, children learn mostly through play which they choose within a well-structured range of activities. In Reception, there is an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Activities are planned around themes that change every fortnight and take into account children's evolving individual interests. Outdoor learning has greatly improved since the last inspection. In the primary school, the curriculum is broad and balanced and includes all the required areas of learning. Arabic and Qur'anic studies benefit from specialist teaching. Personal, social and health education reflects the Islamic ethos of the school and includes citizenship. From Nursery onward, there is great emphasis on developing pupils' reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills, which serves the needs of those who are at various stages of learning English or are bilingual well. Physical education includes termly horse-riding sessions from Reception onward. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has expanded since the last inspection and ICT is now used daily as a learning tool. Pupils' investigative skills are developed well in most subjects and pupils enjoy a lot of practical work in science.

Schemes of work are sufficiently detailed to effectively support the teaching. A two-year cycle ensures that pupils who are in mixed-age classes can progress through topics without unnecessary repetition. Appropriate time is allocated to subjects. However, the timetabling of one hour lessons for Qur'an and Arabic does not facilitate effective learning for most age groups. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English receive one-to-one in-class support. As a result, they make rapid progress in English and can access the curriculum fully within a relatively short time. Resources are sufficient in quantity, quality and range to support pupils' learning. Pupils have opportunities to visit farms, museums and parks and have visits from a nurse, a dentist, a police officer and fire officers. However, these educational visits are insufficiently frequent and their range is too narrow to enhance the curriculum well. This is noted by Key Stage 2 pupils. Pupils have the option to attend a Qur'an club before the school day but there are no other clubs planned to further extend their creative, technological or physical skills.

While teaching and assessment are good overall, assessment is no more than satisfactory in the primary school. Teaching is consistently good in Nursery and Reception. In the primary school, it ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. The staff form a cohesive team driven by a commitment to enable pupils to achieve their best, and this is reflected in their responses to pre-inspection questionnaires. They establish excellent relationships based on mutual respect in their classes and promote high standards of behaviour. Classroom assistants have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers are well qualified and have good subject knowledge. Good and outstanding teaching is based on very high expectations of

what pupils can achieve. Teachers plan tasks that stretch pupils of all abilities and use resources very effectively to support pupils' learning, foster their independence and sustain their interest. Staff consistently engage pupils in discussion from the Nursery onward and generally ask probing questions to deepen pupils' understanding and check on their learning. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and pupils produce a good amount of work. Pupils make excellent progress where the teaching is outstanding because the level of challenge is consistently high. Pupils' learning and progress are only satisfactory where learning expectations are insufficiently clear; where resources, for example maps and dictionaries, are not used effectively to promote pupils' independence and support their understanding; and where questions are undemanding.

Although the school has improved its assessment framework since the last inspection, it recognises that this remains a priority for further development and an assessment coordinator has recently been appointed. In Nursery and Reception, assessment procedures are good. Clear identification of children's individual starting points ensures that staff monitor their progress accurately. Secure assessments of children's development and learning enable staff to plan activities that help children to achieve their next learning steps. In the primary school, baseline and on-going assessments inform teachers of pupils' progress and most teachers use this information to plan challenging tasks. However, pupils are not sufficiently involved in the assessment of their learning and they say that they do not know exactly how much progress they make. They receive useful verbal feedback on how to improve their work but few marking comments that are constructive. Pupils are given learning targets in English and in mathematics but these targets are not consistently used in lessons as success criteria against which pupils can assess their own learning. Furthermore, throughout the school, information from assessments is not collated centrally to give an instant picture of progress for a whole group of pupils from year to year. This makes it difficult for the school to identify priorities for further improvement.

As a result of the good curriculum and good teaching, pupils make good progress over time in relation to their varying starting points, albeit with fluctuations in Key Stage 2. Some pupils make outstanding progress, particularly in Reception and in Year 1. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well in the national tests in English and mathematics.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. While their spiritual and moral development is outstanding, their social development is good throughout the school. Their cultural development is good in Nursery and Reception and satisfactory in the main school. The programme of Islamic and Qur'anic studies, along with weekly assemblies and the excellent role models provided by staff, help pupils to develop a keen sense of what it means to have a good character. Pupils are often led to reflect on their actions and intentions and develop a strong Islamic identity. Their behaviour is outstanding and they remind peers to conduct themselves well. They are polite, considerate and helpful. They are eager to learn

and participate highly in class. They enjoy school and attend regularly. Participation in weekly drama sessions and in end-of-year presentations promotes high levels of self-confidence and good communication skills in pupils.

Pupils form positive and harmonious relationships with peers and staff of diverse cultural heritages. Responsibilities around the school, as class monitors, prefects or pupil council members, foster a good sense of social responsibility. Pupils contribute to the wider community by donating food parcels to a local hospice and raising funds for victims of natural disasters around the globe. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn enterprise and financial skills through the mini-apprentice scheme.

Multicultural education is good in Nursery and Reception where children learn about festivals and a wide range of cultures through practical activities and multicultural resources. Primary-aged pupils learn about their own and other cultures and world religions through the curriculum. However, they have too few first-hand experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the rich cultural and religious diversity of contemporary Britain. Throughout the school, pupils learn about British institutions through the citizenship programme and educational visits.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good, which represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All staff receive the appropriate level of training in child protection at the required intervals. Policies and procedures for child protection, behaviour, bullying, health and safety, first aid and fire safety reflect the current guidance for the age range and are implemented consistently. Supervision is vigilant. Pupils say that they feel safe and free from harassment and bullying. They demonstrate good awareness of how to keep safe around the school. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles through the curriculum and through visits from health professionals. However, their commitment to healthy eating is not sufficiently supported by the school's snack policy as foods high in salt and fat are allowed to be consumed daily. Pupils have daily opportunities for exercise but have restricted space to run.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The proprietors ensure that all the required checks are carried out on staff, volunteers and trustees to ascertain their suitability to work with children. These checks are recorded in a single central register in the correct manner.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises provide accommodation that enables safe and effective learning. Some classrooms have reached full capacity and the school is actively looking for larger premises. The previously reported shortcomings have been remedied. The playground for Nursery and Reception children has recently been equipped with interesting and challenging play equipment. There are plans in hand to give them greater access to the natural environment.

Provision of information

Parents, carers and others receive the required range of information that is clear, accurate and up to date. Parents and carers have at least two opportunities to meet staff to discuss their children's progress and receive an annual report that summarises their children's achievements. Their views are taken into consideration to develop the school. The few parents and carers who completed the online pre-inspection questionnaire are very positive about the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaint procedures meet requirements and are implemented consistently to manage and record complaints.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, further develop pupils' cultural and multicultural awareness and extend their knowledge and skills by widening the enrichment programme and increasing the frequency of first-hand experiences.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, help pupils to make even better progress by:
 - sharing the best practice in teaching so that all learning is at least good
 - making better and wider use of learning targets
 - ensuring that marking shows them exactly how to improve their work against clear success criteria.
- Throughout the school, collate the information from assessments in a way that gives an instant picture of the progress made by a whole group of pupils and so makes it easier for staff to identify priorities for improvement.
- Support pupils throughout the school in developing a stronger commitment to healthy lifestyles.

Inspection judgements

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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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Muslim primary day school		
Date school opened	April 2008		
Age range of pupils	3–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 37	Girls: 47	Total: 84
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 15	Total: 20
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees	£2,500		
Address of school	117 Tennyson Road, Luton, LU1 3RR		
Telephone number	01582 518800		
Email address	admin@oakwoodprimary.co.uk		
Headteacher	Dr Arshad Jamal		
Proprietor	Oakwood Education Trust		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

14 September 2012



Dear pupils
Assalamu alaykum

Inspection of Oakwood Primary School, Luton, LU1 3RR

Thank you for your welcome and the help that you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and observing how you work. You impressed us with your balanced views on your school and your eagerness to learn. You told us that you appreciate attending a Muslim school where you can learn Arabic and about your faith. You enjoy practical activities, outings and learning the Qur'an. You feel safe and free from bullying. You have a good understanding of what the highest standards of conduct are and your behaviour is excellent. You look out for each other and live together in harmony. You have thoughtful and sensible ideas about how to make your school even better. We found that your school is a good school.

These are the things we liked best about your school.

- You learn a wide range of subjects and develop good skills in reading, writing, numeracy and ICT.
- Your teachers teach you well and so you make good progress during the time you spend at school.
- The adults in your school look after you well.

To make your school even better than it is, we have asked your headteacher to:

- plan more educational visits and out-of-school activities to help you to develop a better understanding of the diverse cultures and religions that exist in Britain and to extend your creative, technological and physical skills
- ensure that teachers always use the best strategies to help you to make even better progress
- help you to adopt even healthier eating habits and to exercise more vigorously.

You can help your school to achieve this by continuing to behave as well and working as hard as we saw during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Michèle Messaoudi
Lead inspector