

Ayesha Community School

Montagu Road Campus, 10a Montagu Road, Hendon, London NW4 3ES

Inspection dates

3–5 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Adequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and school leaders have secured improvements in all aspects of the school's work. As a result, the school now provides its pupils with a good education. Leaders make sure that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Leaders have benefited from quality training. This has enhanced their effectiveness in developing teachers' pedagogical skills and holding them to account for their performance. Consequently, teaching is good and improving.
- Teaching is good because most of the time teachers plan activities that meet the needs and interests of pupils. They use systems well to check pupils' progress to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders and teachers use the information well to arrange extra support for those pupils who need to catch up and for stretching the most able. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Across all key stages and subjects, pupils make good progress overall. All school leavers continue into post-16 education or training.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They work hard, are inquisitive and try their best. Misbehaviour is rare.
- Leaders implement rigorous safeguarding and welfare procedures. As a result, pupils feel safe and their well-being is assured.
- Leaders enhance the curriculum with many enrichment activities. These make an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. New leaders have improved the quality of teaching and made sure that children make good progress academically and socially. As a result, children leave Reception well prepared for Year 1.
- The Reception classroom provides children with a highly stimulating learning environment. The Nursery classroom and the outdoor area, however, are not as effective, especially in extending children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the work to improve the quality of teaching so that it is routinely of the highest quality to ensure that pupils make even better progress.
- Improve early years provision by:
 - ensuring that the Nursery indoor classroom is as stimulating as the Reception classroom
 - making better use of the outdoor space to extend further children’s learning, especially in English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and the new leadership team have created a positive and ambitious culture in the school. They have high expectations for themselves, the staff and pupils. They aspire to help pupils to become upright citizens, making a strong contribution to society and to reach high academic standards. Staff morale is high, as they feel valued. All the parents and carers who responded to the survey and who spoke with inspectors say that they would recommend this school to other parents. Typical of their views were comments such as: 'The teachers and other staff are dedicated. They value behaviour and morals alongside academic progression and well-being of the children,' and 'My child feels safe and is happy to be part of the school.'
- Leaders and teachers frequently attend a range of training events and learn from best practice in other schools. In addition, the proprietor commissions a consultant to give one-to-one support to leaders. Leaders have therefore sharpened their skills to support teachers in improving the quality of teaching and on how to hold them to account for their pupils' progress. Senior leaders have introduced new systems for assessing pupils' progress. Teachers are increasingly using the assessment information to effectively tailor teaching to meet the needs of pupils and to support those who need to catch up. As a result, teaching and learning have improved and pupils make overall good progress across the year groups and subjects.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum on offer to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of the pupils. They have made some changes to the delivery of the primary curriculum so that pupils can better understand links and common themes that go across subjects. In most classes, pupils are now given opportunities to apply their writing skills across the different areas and to practise their mathematical skills to solve problems. In the secondary phase, leaders offer a range of GCSE options with girls typically taking 10 or 11 GCSE courses. Leaders do not offer a vocational option. When a group of pupils request the opportunity to study a subject not usually on offer, the proprietor endeavours to find a teacher to facilitate the pupils' request. Leaders are currently considering ways in which they can extend pupils' opportunities to engage in physical exercise and sporting activities.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. These aspects are strongly promoted through the formal curriculum and many enrichment experiences. Alongside the Islamic studies curriculum, for instance, pupils learn about other faiths, visit their places of worship and listen to visitors talk about their religious beliefs and practices. The many visits, such as to museums and the British Library, and a range of speakers who visit the school make a strong contribution to deepening pupils' learning. Pupils visit the Houses of Parliament and talk with MPs and are involved in local and national good citizen activities. Pupils learn about people with protected characteristics. They respect difference and value diversity. Pupils recently attended a women's cricket test match at Lords cricket ground, for instance, to help them understand gender equality. Pupils leave the school very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance

- The sole proprietor is the principal. There are no other governors. He makes sure that the school meets all of the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is an excellent culture of safeguarding at the school. Seven members of staff have completed the designated safeguarding leads training and all staff have completed additional training on female genital mutilation, the 'Prevent' duty, and on forced marriages. The proprietor has particular expertise and prior experience of leading on the local strategy as part of the 'Prevent' duty. Another member of staff is an accredited trainer for designated safeguarding leads. As a result, members of staff are fully aware of the range of potential safeguarding concerns that may arise. They are vigilant and immediately report anything they spot that might suggest that a pupil is at risk.
- Leaders work closely with external agencies across three local authorities, and with parents, to make sure that pupils are safe and that they address pupils' welfare needs.
- The curriculum helps pupils learn about danger and how to keep themselves safe. Visitors, such as from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the police and fire services reinforce pupils' safety awareness. Furthermore, the school takes part in the 'city safe' initiative, where pupils are trained to seek refuge in approved businesses if they feel under threat when walking in the street.
- The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website. The policy has due regard to current government requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good and improving. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress in both the primary and secondary phases.
- Teachers make good use of the new assessment tools to help them plan activities to meet pupils' needs and build progressively on their prior learning. This helps pupils gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications expected for their age.
- Teachers and leaders skilfully tailor support to help pupils who fall behind and need to catch up. This includes the few who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. As a result, these pupils make the same good progress as their peers.
- Homework is used effectively to consolidate pupils' learning and to help pupils develop their research skills. In business studies, for instance, pupils researched how Lord Sugar became an entrepreneur and a very successful business person.
- Effective training has resulted in teachers improving their pedagogical skills. Typically they give pupils work that challenges them to learn well and make good progress. They establish strong working relationships and high expectations for behaviour, which means that pupils work diligently and do not waste time. Teachers question pupils and probe their responses in order to deepen their thinking. They help pupils understand how well

they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. They identify pupils who find the work easy and set them tasks that are more challenging. Occasionally, however, teaching is not of this quality and so pupils do not routinely reach the high standards across the year groups and subjects of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. As they progress through the school, pupils gain in self-confidence. They are keen to develop the personal skills and academic qualifications that will help them pursue their ambitions for the future successfully.
- Pupils are very aware of all forms of bullying, but say that it hardly ever happens at the school. Leaders train some primary pupils as 'bullying ambassadors' to deal with the odd altercation. They do so by bringing the parties together and applying their skills to achieve restorative justice.
- In citizenship lessons, and during assemblies, leaders and teachers place an emphasis on helping pupils develop their resilience. This includes giving them the tools to be able to resist possible attempts that others might make to radicalise them.
- Pupils are involved in a number of inter-faith projects and forums. This enables pupils to meet and work with pupils of other faiths. It promotes understanding and respect of each other's faiths and cultures. Pupils are also involved in raising funds for a range of local, national and international charities. The school is a member of a local branch of an organisation which arranges community events linked to issues of democracy and social justice. At the time of the last London mayoral election, for instance, pupils joined others across London to canvas views on what the new mayor's number one priority should be.
- A number of secondary teachers have attended training courses on developing their counselling skills and understanding of mental and emotional health. This has helped them to support pupils who need help with their mental and emotional well-being.
- Pupils benefit from effective careers guidance. When they leave the school, they are well set to prepare for their careers as they move on to the next stages of their lives.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They have excellent attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and are inquisitive to find out new things. They arrive punctually to lessons and with a very positive mindset to learn. They work well individually and in groups, supporting each other and trying their best. This makes a very strong contribution to their successful learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take good care of the school's environment. They get on very well with each other and are respectful to all. They move around the school and eat lunch sensibly and maturely.
- Attendance has improved markedly this year and is now above average. Pupils arrive punctually to school and to lessons, and there have been few exclusions.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As a result of the improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, pupils now make good progress overall across the subjects and year groups.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those who join mid-phase, make similar good progress as their peers. This is because leaders provide them with well-tailored support.
- The most able pupils make good progress because teachers set them work that challenges them to think deeper.
- In 2017, GCSE attainment for pupils' best eight subjects was similar to the national average. There was some variability, however, across the subjects. Pupils' results in English and in the English Baccalaureate qualification subjects were higher than they were in mathematics, for example.
- Inspection evidence confirms the leaders' view that, since the start of this year, more pupils are making good progress and some are making substantial progress. Progress is not outstanding overall. This is because there remains variation in the quality of teaching across the subjects and year groups, which leads to differences in pupils' learning and progress.
- Pupils routinely leave the school and proceed to post-16 education. They are well prepared for their future lives in modern Britain.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years leadership is effective. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years. They have made a number of improvements this year and have credible plans for improvement. Leaders have a sound understanding of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. The setting meets all the statutory requirements related to the early years.
- Leaders have improved their own effectiveness and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Members of staff worked closely with external consultants and colleagues from other schools, and all have visited other settings to see best practice. As a result, teaching is now good and children's outcomes have improved.
- Leaders and staff use frequent assessments of children's progress to plan activities that meet children's needs and interests. They provide extra help for children who have identified gaps in their knowledge and skills. In addition, they set more challenging activities for the most able children. Teachers are skilled in modelling good speaking and use of advanced vocabulary. This helps children, especially those new to English, to catch up with their peers.
- In designing activities that cover all aspects of the early years curriculum, staff take into account children's interests. This was demonstrated in Reception, where children are learning about 'people who help us'. Children were particularly fascinated with the police and the mountain rescue service. Staff, therefore, provided them with plentiful resources

to pretend to do these jobs and to learn related key phrases like 'placing someone under arrest'.

- Children enter the early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning. The proportion of children who leave Reception with a good level of development increased by 10 percentage points this year. The proportion is well above the 2017 national average. Furthermore, across the areas of learning, a greater proportion of children exceeded expectations for their age. This means that children are prepared well for entry into Year 1.
- Children behave sensibly and learn to share. Children show this in Nursery when they independently use an egg timer to determine when to hand over a piece of equipment to another child. Children feel safe and secure as they know that adults care for them. As they progress through Reception they grow in confidence. This was evident when a number of children approached the inspectors, insisting that the inspectors look at their work.
- Indoor resources in the Reception classroom are particularly well organised to stimulate children's interest in all areas of learning. The Nursery classroom, although adequately covering all areas of learning, is not of the same standard as the Reception class. This is also true of the outdoors, which is equally not as well resourced, organised and stimulating as the Reception classroom. This limits opportunities for children to make substantial and sustained progress to acquire skills beyond those expected for their age, including in English and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	131261
DfE registration number	302/6119
Inspection number	10012794

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Muslim day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed in the primary Girls in the secondary
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Proprietor	Sayed Shakil Ahmed
Principal	Sayed Shakil Ahmed
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,600
Telephone number	020 3411 2660
Website	www.ayeshaschool.org
Email address	info@ayeshas.org
Date of previous inspection	4–6 June 2013

Information about this school

- Ayesha Community School is a faith school that serves the Muslim communities of North London. The school is registered to admit up to 400 pupils from the age of three to 19. Both boys and girls attend the primary department of the school, but the secondary department is for girls only.
- The school opened in 2006. This was the school's fourth standard inspection, the last one being in June 2013. The principal of the school is also the sole proprietor.
- The school provides a mix of Islamic and secular teaching. Its stated aim is 'to help children realise their spiritual, moral and academic potential in a welcoming, secure and supportive environment, centred on the Islamic ethos of the school. The school enables pupils to enjoy learning, develop character and competence, and prepare for further education and the responsibilities of adult life in contemporary Britain.'

- The school uses the laboratories at another local school for teaching practical science at key stage 4.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school does not currently have any pupils in the sixth form.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has reorganised the school's leadership structure. There are no longer headteachers of the primary and secondary departments. He created new head of department posts during the last academic year. The new post of vice principal was filled in November 2017. A new leader of the early years started in September 2017 and the Nursery class leader started in January 2018.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed learning in eight classrooms in the primary phase, most of which were visited with the vice principal. Inspectors could not observe learning in the secondary phase as pupils were doing tests all week.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work. They checked the school's information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors spoke with the proprietor, the vice principal, other leaders, teachers and other members of staff. Inspectors had formal discussions with two groups of pupils and various informal discussions with pupils during social times and lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 35 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and parents' additional written comments. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors checked documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work for compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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