

New Mind School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

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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

New Mind School is a Muslim day school for pupils aged three to 11 years that opened in Brixton in 1996. There are 16 pupils on roll, including children of Early Years Foundation Stage age. No child is supported by government funding. Pupils are taught in mixed-age groups. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs and none with English as an additional language. The school serves primarily the African and Caribbean communities and all pupils and staff share these heritages. While the school's ethos is centred on the Islamic faith, it is open to pupils of any faith. The school prepares its older pupils to take the entrance examinations to local selective secondary schools. It aims to provide 'a holistic education, teaching knowledge of God, oneself and respect for others'. It seeks to teach 'a curriculum which is both meaningful and appropriate, one which is sensitive to the varied needs and experiences of pupils and their community'. The school was last inspected in 2007, when a number of regulations were not met. There have been several changes in staffing since the previous inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Despite inadequate provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, New Mind School provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets its aims. This judgement is made because Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in the Key Stage 1 class and pupils in the Key Stage 1 and 2 classes make satisfactory progress as a result of the satisfactory curriculum and teaching. Pupils' personal development, especially their spiritual development, is good. The arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good including those for safeguarding. The school has made some improvement since the last inspection and now meets all but one of the regulations for independent schools. However, it is now failing to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Quality of education

The school was required, following the last inspection, to document the curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 further, to provide more detailed schemes of work and to

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

increase the amount of taught time. The curriculum is now satisfactory as is the amount of taught time. It is planned sufficiently well to enable a clear progression in learning through the age range and the schemes of work provide effective guidance to help teachers plan for mixed-age classes. The curriculum is relevant to African and Caribbean children and makes good provision for their personal development. It is not yet implemented fully in Key Stage 1 although the work that has been done so far is satisfactory. Personal, social and health education is taught weekly and is effectively embedded in the ethos of the school. The school teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education (RE) and Arabic. Provision for physical education (PE) is through weekly swimming and games using local facilities. Information and communication technology is taught as a separate subject at Key Stage 2. Pupils go on visits outside school such as to museums in London.

Overall, in Key Stage 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Following the last inspection, the school was required to ensure that lessons were well planned and taught and a suitable assessment framework devised. Some improvements have been made and pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. Older pupils make good progress. Pupils who need additional help are well supported in class and make satisfactory progress. The teaching of the older pupils is characterised by good subject knowledge, confident teaching methods and a clear sense of direction in learning, which leads pupils to make connections and think at a high level. The positive working relationships between staff and all pupils are based on mutual respect and the promotion of pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence and independence. This manifests itself in all pupils' positive attitudes to work and caring attitudes to each other. The careful building up of learning during the better lessons raises standards and provides an appropriate level of challenge for all in a mixed-age class. Basic skills in English and mathematics are given emphasis and reading skills are well developed. Arabic is also introduced through other subjects, for example using the Arabic word for charity during an RE lesson. However, in some lessons for the younger pupils, the work is not sufficiently well planned or matched to the needs of the pupils and there is an over-emphasis on the use of worksheets. Opportunities for practical work are too limited, particularly in science. Resources are generally adequate and used well.

A suitable assessment framework for Key Stage 1 and 2 has been introduced since the last inspection. The staff have begun to implement it but it is not yet fully embedded in practice in all age groups. Some of the marking gives the pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work but this is not evident throughout the school. Parents receive two written reports each year. The reports give a satisfactory picture of pupils' progress and set out strategies for improvement.

There is no Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Early Years Foundation Stage children placed in the Key Stage 1 class make at least satisfactory progress; progress in reading and personal development is good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of the pupils is good. Pupils develop a strong spiritual awareness through assemblies, prayer and time for reflection. From the earliest age, they learn to demonstrate a sense of mutual respect and a tolerance for each other based on the strong spiritual ethos of the school. In an assembly, pupils were learning to support each other through Biblical and Qur'anic examples. Lessons in RE help the pupils to develop an awareness of other religions and customs. Pupils are fully involved and participate in the life of their school. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect. Their moral awareness is good. They have a strong sense of the difference between right and wrong, continually reinforced through assemblies, lessons and play. Through discussion sessions, they are encouraged to share their experiences of good and bad deeds and they apply these insights during their time in school. Pupils' social development is good. They are encouraged by staff to think beyond themselves, to be considerate of each other and to be aware of the impact of their behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attendance is good and they confirm that they enjoy school and that everyone is friendly. The older pupils are given responsibility to look after the younger ones. All members of the school are encouraged to think of the wider world and they raise money for charities such as the Haiti earthquake relief and charities closer to home. Pupils' economic well-being is promoted well.

Pupils' cultural development is good. Racial understanding and harmony are effectively promoted. They learn about their own cultural background and that of others. They are encouraged to think of their cultural heritage and to look at positive role models to build cultural knowledge and self-esteem, as demonstrated in a poster at school: 'I am not ashamed of the slave trade but only ashamed that I have felt ashamed.' Pupils visit places of interest in London to develop their knowledge of English services and institutions.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of all the pupils is good. The school provides an orderly, calm and welcoming environment in which pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school has devised and implemented the required range of policies, which includes those for anti-bullying, health and safety on visits outside school and safeguarding. The named person responsible for child protection has been trained, as have the rest of the staff, and the policy for child protection is fully implemented. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The precautions for fire prevention are good with documented fire drills and a fire risk assessment carried out. Risk assessments are carried out on activities both within school and for visits outside the school. The first aid policy is fully implemented and staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid. Pupils are encouraged to behave responsibly and to show consideration for others; instances of bullying are very rare. Pupils develop a good understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and a balanced diet. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 have sufficient physical exercise during the school

day as they use an adjacent public playground well. The family atmosphere created by the school enables them to enjoy a very high level of well-being. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The attendance and admission registers are kept according to the regulations. The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended and has devised a three-year accessibility plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school checks the suitability of all staff and the proprietors to work with children and the required information is held on the single central register of staff appointments.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is based in several ground floor rooms in a row of business suites. The premises and accommodation are safe and suitable except for the lack of an outdoor play area for the Early Years Foundation Stage and facilities for pupils who are ill. Pupils who are ill are made comfortable until their parents come to collect them. The building is adequately maintained and decorated. The school uses a fenced public playground opposite the premises for break times and uses local facilities for PE.

Provision of information

There is an appropriate range of information for parents, carers and others, including a website and a prospectus. Parents have opportunities to discuss their children's progress with the teachers. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very supportive of the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a set of procedures which meet the regulations.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The school provides an education for pupils aged between three and 11 years of age. Accordingly, the school is expected to have in place Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Currently, there is no such provision. Children of Early Years Foundation Stage age are taught in the Key Stage 1 class using the Year 1 curriculum.

The quality of the education provided is satisfactory and meets children's needs. Children enjoy learning. Progress is at least satisfactory in all areas of learning but is weakest in developing knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development where opportunities for learning are more limited. In reading, progress is good; it is also good in personal development because of the opportunity to be in a mixed-age group which includes children from different backgrounds and cultures. However, there are too few opportunities to use indoor and outdoor space for free-

flow play. Assessment is based on the arrangements for Year 1. Nevertheless, staff have sufficient information from Year 1 to inform the completion of the Early Years Foundation Stage profile.

Leadership and management are inadequate. This is because there is no organised Early Years Foundation Stage provision. In addition, staff do not have appropriate qualifications to teach in the setting.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k)).

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- provide a suitable curriculum and appropriately qualified staff
- assess the performance of children of Early Years Foundation stage age so as to support teaching and provide a basis for completing the Early Years Foundation Stage profile
- provide a suitable indoor and outdoor learning environment to support physical and other aspects of children's development.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- implement the Key Stage 1 and 2 curriculum fully and use it in planning and teaching to meet the needs of the pupils in all age groups
- ensure that all marking gives the pupils guidance on how to improve their work
- improve assessment of pupils' learning
- reduce the use of worksheets.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made

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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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage				✓
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage				✓
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage				✓

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Day Muslim primary school		
Date school opened	September 1996		
Age range of pupils	3–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 10	Total: 16
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 (day pupils)	£ 5,436		
Address of school	Suite 9 Warwick House Overton Road Brixton, London SW9 7JP		
Telephone number	020 7733 3975		
Email address	info@newmindschool.org		
Headteacher	Eric Odartei Lamptey-Muhammad		
Proprietor	New Mind Trust		