

Buttercup Primary School

59–66 Greenfield Road, London, E1 1EJ

Inspection dates

2–4 July 2013

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| Overall effectiveness | Good | 2 |
| Pupils' achievement | Good | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour and personal development | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | Good | 2 |
| Quality of curriculum | Good | 2 |
| Pupils' welfare, health and safety | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- The headteacher focuses all staff on providing high standards of education within an Islamic environment, resulting in good teaching that enables pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils, including those who are new to English, achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science owing to great emphasis placed on developing their literacy, numeracy and enquiry skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are skilful at keeping pupils actively engaged in their learning.
- The curriculum for Islamic studies combines very effectively with personal, social, health and citizenship education and makes a strong contribution to pupils' good personal development and behaviour.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is a small amount of adequate teaching and there are minor weaknesses in assessment procedures because checks on the quality of teaching lack rigour.
- Art and design, history and geography are not always taught in sufficient depth.
- A small minority of pupils only make adequate progress because their achievement is hindered by poor attendance and punctuality.
- The governors do not challenge the school sufficiently to ensure that pupils make outstanding, rather than good, progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 11 lessons or sessions taught by eight different teachers or teaching assistants and had conversations with pupils. Meetings were held with senior leaders and teaching staff. Documentation and policies, particularly relating to safeguarding and welfare, and health and safety, were scrutinised, as well as curriculum plans, teachers' assessments and pupils' work.
- The inspector also took account of the responses in eight questionnaires completed by staff. No governors were available for a meeting during the inspection. There were no parental responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Buttercup Primary School is a new Muslim primary day school for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years. It was registered in June 2012 to admit up to 60 pupils. It is located in Whitechapel in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The school is housed on the top floor of a building that was formerly a college of higher education. It uses alternative provision for sports and two local parks for outdoor play.
- There are currently 61 pupils on roll, aged from three to 11 years. There are 28 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, all of whom attend full time. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- Pupils come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds including mostly Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali and North African heritages. Most pupils are at various advanced stages of learning English and a few are bilingual. There are six pupils who are at an early stage of learning English in Key Stage 1.
- One of the school's aims is to 'provide an enriched academic education to pupils within an Islamic environment'.
- The school has recently moved to new premises and wishes to increase the number on roll from 60 to 100 pupils. The Department for Education has received an application for a material change from the school. As part of this inspection, the inspector assessed whether the new premises meet the standards for independent schools.
- This is the school's first inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Widen strategies to promote good levels of attendance among all pupils so that all can make good or outstanding progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring staff are always attentive to pupils' responses in lessons to address any misconceptions quickly and give pupils timely feedback so they can improve their work instantly while working through tasks
 - tailoring professional development closer to the individual needs of staff
 - ensuring that procedures for continuously assessing pupils' work and involving pupils in the assessment of their learning are implemented consistently to help pupils make outstanding progress
 - making arrangements for the external moderation of all teacher assessments in the primary department.
- Ensure that, in the primary curriculum, art and design, history and geography are always taught in sufficient depth.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - supporting staff better by providing more relevant opportunities for continuing professional development
 - developing the skills of middle managers so they can share the responsibilities of checking the quality of the curriculum, teaching and pupils' learning in each subject
 - improving governors' understanding of how they can challenge the school to enable pupils to make outstanding, rather than good, progress.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good overall throughout the school. Most pupils join the school with levels of attainment that are below expectations for their age. Most make good progress in relation to their varying starting points in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Some make outstanding progress. Pupils who have learning difficulties also make good progress because they are effectively supported in each lesson. Pupils make rapid progress in reading and writing owing to good teaching and a good curriculum that places great emphasis on developing their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. As a result, pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language can promptly access the rest of the curriculum. In science, pupils develop good enquiry and analytical skills and have opportunities to apply and extend their scientific knowledge when writing up experiments. Pupils also make good progress in Qur'anic recitation and in applying their knowledge of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) to real-life situations. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) in most subjects and develop good communication skills.

Pupils' achievement is not outstanding for two reasons. First, a small minority of pupils only make adequate progress because their erratic patterns of attendance and punctuality hinder their achievement. Second, pupils do not make consistently good progress in art and design, history and geography because these subjects are not always taught in sufficient depth.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress towards the expected goals and achieve well in all areas of learning because the staff plan exciting learning opportunities that fire children's curiosity. They also skilfully engage in children's play so that children sustain an activity long enough to learn from it and develop good communication skills. The staff motivate children extremely well and children are eager to learn and proud of their achievements. Most children achieve very well in reading, writing, calculation and expressive arts.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' good behaviour and personal development are supported well by the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school. The staff create a warm and nurturing ethos centred on Islamic spiritual and moral values that are promoted through daily *salah* (prayers) and *du'a* (supplications), and the Islamic curriculum. Pupils have frequent opportunities to reflect on Islamic beliefs and how these should influence their behaviour and social relationships. For example, they were reminded of the principle of brotherhood when examining demonstrations of an overly competitive spirit displayed on sports day.

Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and the vast majority respect the boundaries set by the staff. Their behaviour is good. The more mature pupils spontaneously take on the responsibility to remind peers who find it difficult to always behave well of what is expected, in a way that is both assertive and sensitive. Pupils know about different types of bullying and know how to keep safe. The staff consistently encourage good manners and pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. Pupils of diverse heritages enjoy harmonious working relationships. From the nursery onwards, pupils are eager to learn and proud to show their work. While most pupils attend regularly and are punctual, a small minority arrive late and have erratic patterns of attendance. Although their attendance is improving, it remains below the average for pupils of compulsory school age.

Pupils contribute to the school community by helping around the school as monitors and house captains. Through the pupil council, they make suggestions for improving school life and have discussed the rewards and sanctions system. They contribute to the wider community by raising

funds for charity. For example, they have run stalls and performed a *nasheed* (Islamic song) in public, which helped to raise their self-confidence. Pupils gain a good awareness of public institutions and democracy through citizenship and educational visits, for example to the Houses of Parliament, and through interaction with fire officers, police officers, charity officials and journalists. The school ensures that where political issues are considered, a balanced presentation of opposing views is provided. Pupils learn about the diversity of religious beliefs that exists in multicultural Britain in a way that promotes social harmony through the religious education curriculum and visits to local places of worship. Their cultural development is promoted adequately by the provision for art and design and technology and visits to museums.

Quality of teaching

Good

Teaching is predominantly good throughout the school and enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Lessons are planned effectively for mixed-age classes. The staff are skilful at keeping pupils engaged through the effective use of questioning that deepens pupils' understanding and through paired and group work that enables pupils to rehearse their ideas and learn from each other. The staff challenge pupils well through probing questions that quickly build pupils' understanding and challenge through the use of resources that are generally suitably adapted to meet pupils' individual needs closely. Teaching is at its best where the staff communicate enthusiasm and so motivate pupils highly, and when pupils can measure their success against specific criteria. In these lessons, there is a buzz of excitement and pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to support different groups of pupils, including those who have learning or linguistic difficulties. Pupils who have learning difficulties or are at risk of falling behind their peers, are supported effectively by teachers paying detailed attention to pupils' individual educational plans.

Teaching is not outstanding because there is a small minority of teaching that is no more than adequate and there are minor weaknesses in assessment. Where the teaching is adequate, the teacher is not always sufficiently attentive to pupils' responses to promptly dispel misconceptions and help pupils to overcome a hurdle sooner rather than later in the lesson. On occasion, when pupils tackle tasks, the teacher does not always check pupils' learning frequently enough during the lesson to give the constructive feedback pupils need to improve their work instantly. In other cases, the resources used do not always match pupils' individual needs closely enough. In such cases, the pace of learning drops and pupils can only make adequate progress.

There are systems to assess pupils' learning and to track their progress from term to term in a way that enables comparisons with national figures. However, procedures for assessing pupils' work continuously are not implemented consistently throughout the primary department. Also, while teacher assessments are moderated externally in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they are not in the primary department. Pupils are shown how to improve through constructive verbal and written feedback, the use of success criteria and learning targets, and academic reports. In some classes, they gain an even clearer picture of what to do to improve by being involved in self- and peer-assessment. However, the practice of involving pupils closely in the assessment of their learning is not consistent through the primary department.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The good curriculum meets the needs of all pupils throughout the school and provides them with a broad range of learning opportunities for all to make good progress in their academic learning and personal development. The curriculum covers all the required subject areas while placing a suitably great emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills. This emphasis enables pupils who are at an early stage or various advanced stages of learning English to make rapid progress in English and

access the rest of the curriculum promptly.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum is taught through a topic-based approach and reflects the interests of the children. The learning environment is organised in an interesting way that encourages children to explore things and learn through a good balance of play which they initiate and activities led by adults. From the nursery onwards, the staff consistently promote pupils' speaking and thinking skills to help them develop good writing skills. In the primary department, pupils have regular opportunities to extend their writing skills in other subjects than English, for example in science, history, geography and Islamic studies. These opportunities are more consistent where worksheets are used only infrequently and so pupils' independence is not restricted. Pupils' enquiry skills are effectively developed through practical science and their ICT skills through most subjects. The provision for art, history and geography is only adequate as these subjects are not always taught in sufficient depth for pupils to develop a broad understanding of the subject matter. The curriculum for Islamic studies combines very effectively with personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development by making Islamic teachings relevant to all aspects of pupils' lives.

The planning of the curriculum is based on commercial schemes of work and adapted to teach mixed-age classes. The schemes of work are sufficiently detailed to support the teaching.

There are adequate resources to teach the curriculum. Most areas of the curriculum are appropriately enhanced by educational visits. Pupils have the opportunity to extend their physical and creative skills through after-school clubs that include archery, martial arts, creative writing and *nasheed* (Islamic songs).

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is underpinned by the consistent implementation of up-to-date policies and procedures for child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour, health and safety and first aid. All the independent school regulations are met. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all staff, governors and volunteers are properly vetted before working at the school. The required checks are properly recorded in a single central register. All staff receive the appropriate level of training in child protection. There is a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid with paediatric qualifications. Risk assessments for fire safety, the premises and on-site and off-site activities are carried out carefully. The school makes very effective use of public services and specialist agencies to eliminate bullying and teach pupils how to keep safe in the community and when using technology. The staff deal with the few recorded instances of bullying swiftly and effectively. Accidents are appropriately recorded. Throughout the school, pupils are supervised well and they feel safe. The school monitors attendance and punctuality effectively and takes robust measures to improve the attendance of a small minority of pupils whose attendance patterns are erratic. As a result, attendance has improved since the beginning of the academic year but remains below average for some. The school has plans in hand to widen the range of strategies used to promote regular attendance and good punctuality. Pupils are strongly encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through the curriculum and visits from health practitioners.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher communicates her ambitious vision of a high-achieving school very effectively and focuses on setting high standards of education. She ensures that the staff create a positive Islamic ethos in which pupils can achieve well academically and in their personal development. There are systems to make effective checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum and pupils' work. As a result, teaching, the curriculum and achievement are good. However, most staff report that they do not feel sufficiently well supported

by the programme of professional development provided.

There are plans in hand to create middle manager roles and develop the skills of middle managers to share the responsibilities of checking the quality of the curriculum, teaching and pupils' learning in each subject. Self-evaluation is accurate and further improvements are supported by a useful management plan. The governing body gives effective support in some aspects of school life. However, it does not provide the level of challenge required to lift pupils' achievement from good to outstanding. The school works closely with parents and carers to improve attendance and punctuality and so support pupils' achievement, behaviour and personal development. The school is supported well by a parents' and teachers' association that raises funds for the school.

Parents and carers receive all the information to which they are entitled. The complaints procedures meet requirements. The premises meet the required standards. They provide light and airy teaching accommodation that enables safe and effective learning. In the absence of a playground, the school makes effective use of two local parks located nearby for outdoor play and outdoor physical exercise. The school has made arrangements to use the playground of an adjacent maintained school from September 2013. The material change is recommended for a maximum of 80 pupils.

The proprietor has ensured that all the regulations for independent schools are met.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements. |
| Grade 3 | Adequate | A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses. |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 138564 |
| Inspection number | 420260 |
| DfE registration number | 211/6003 |

This inspection was carried out 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.

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| Type of school | Muslim primary day school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 61 |
| Number of part time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Neyarun Nessa |
| Headteacher | Rena Begum |
| Date of previous school inspection | First inspection |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £6,430 |
| Telephone number | 020 74883010 |
| Email address | info@buttercupprimary.co.uk |

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