

Olive Tree Primary School

116 Bury Park Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 1HE

Inspection dates

8–10 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Teaching, learning and assessment do not promote good progress. Leaders' actions to improve these areas are yet to show the full impact required.
- In some classes, low-level disruption slows down pupils' learning because teachers do not deal with it effectively.
- Many of the improvements seen are still work in progress. Staff do not apply all new policies and procedures systematically.
- The governing body does not have sufficient information to fully hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders check where pupils go when they leave the school but do not always follow statutory guidance when notifying the local authority.
- Pupils, particularly the most able, do not always make as much progress as they should because teachers sometimes plan work that is too easy for them.
- Some pupils do not know how to improve their work, so continue to make the same mistakes. Some produce work that is untidy or incomplete.
- The improved personal, social, health and citizenship education programme has not resulted in a better understanding of equality on the part of some pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- New leaders and governors have made significant improvements to the school's premises and curriculum. Pupils now study a broad range of subjects and learn within an attractive and safe environment.
- Pupils attend well and are typically polite and articulate. Serious misbehaviour is exceptionally rare.
- Pupils read well. Their writing typically shows a good command of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Over time, older pupils' attainment has been at least in line with national averages for reading, writing and mathematics.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. Their details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership, management and governance and ensure compliance with all of the independent school standards by ensuring that:
 - leaders and governors have enough information about the effectiveness of all aspects of the school’s work, so that they can provide support and challenge to bring about further improvement
 - all legal responsibilities are met in a timely manner, particularly those relating to the provision of information about pupils who are removed from the school’s roll
 - new curriculum plans are fully implemented, and teachers make effective use of the guidance about what to teach and how to meet the needs of all pupils
 - all staff follow recently introduced policies and procedures, so that practices become consistent and routine.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make the progress they should by ensuring that teachers:
 - use the information they have about pupils’ progress to inform their planning, so that the work that pupils do helps them to move forward in their learning
 - provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to write at length
 - enable pupils to apply their mathematics skills to reasoning and problem-solving tasks
 - require pupils to think deeply and provide pupils, particularly the most able, with sufficiently challenging work to complete
 - develop pupils’ subject-specific skills in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - tackle pupils’ misconceptions and provide feedback in line with the school’s policy, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - eliminating low-level disruption to learning
 - ensuring that all pupils complete their work fully and present it well
 - deepening pupils’ understanding of the features of Britain’s democratic arrangements, and why these are important
 - ensuring that all pupils understand the need to tolerate and respect those with different beliefs and lifestyles.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders and governors have failed to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards. Although some significant recent improvements are evident, a number remain unmet, including some relating to the effectiveness of the curriculum and of teaching, learning and assessment. The school's new leaders are demonstrating the capacity to make further improvements.
- Since taking up his post in September 2018, the interim headteacher has ensured that pupils study a broad range of subjects and has introduced new and detailed curriculum plans for each. These plans provide teachers with clear guidance about what to teach, how and when. It is too soon to determine fully the impact of the school's new curriculum upon pupils' progress.
- Leaders have ensured that all pupils completed assessments at the start of the current academic year to determine their starting points in English and mathematics. They have a clear system both for monitoring pupils' attainment and for checking the accuracy of teachers' judgements. However, leaders have not ensured that all teachers use this assessment information to plan tasks that help pupils take the next steps in their learning.
- Over time, leaders' checks on the effectiveness of teaching have lacked rigour. Since the beginning of the current school year they have been more systematic. Leaders have made clear the aspects of teaching that need to improve and are providing training to enable staff to make the necessary changes. It is too soon to determine the adequacy of this work.
- Leaders combine an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses with a determination to make the necessary improvements. Teachers and other staff demonstrate similar ambition but are still adapting to very many new, necessary and recent changes to ways of working. Policies relating to behaviour management, lesson planning and the provision of feedback are not yet being followed consistently by all staff.
- Leaders have not ensured that the correct procedures are followed when pupils are removed from the admission and attendance registers. Although they check where pupils go, they have not, in some cases, provided the local authority with that information in a timely manner.
- The interim headteacher has acted to rectify many of the shortcomings relating to the school premises and to health and safety routines that were evident during the previous standard inspection and subsequent emergency inspections. The school's premises are now attractive, well maintained and safe.
- Recent changes have made it easier for staff to record the incidence of disruptive behaviour, but leaders do not have an accurate picture of trends over time because the system is too new. They are not yet able to use an analysis of the information to work out which pupils need support to improve their conduct.
- The school's revised arrangements for personal, social, health and citizenship education demonstrate a commitment by leaders to actively promote British values. Pupils learn about important people or groups who have striven for equality such as Rosa Parks and the suffragettes. A few pupils demonstrate tolerance but not respect for some people's

sexual orientations. Leaders have adapted the curriculum to challenge this.

- Leaders provide for pupils' spiritual and moral education through the school's ethos and values. Much emphasis is placed upon the importance of helping others, including through the 'Hadith of the week' teachings that provide guidance for pupils on how they should conduct themselves. Work that is on display and in pupils' books indicates their understanding of some of the key tenets of different religious faiths. Pupils understand the importance of the rule of law. Visitors to the school, along with trips and visits, help pupils to meet people from different backgrounds.
- Parents spoke positively with inspectors about the recent changes that the school's new leaders have made and the impact they think these are having upon their children's progress and personal development. Pupils also told inspectors that they thought things were improving.

Governance

- Over time, the school's governors have not held leaders to account for their performance adequately.
- Recent changes to the composition of the governing body and the ways in which it works are giving governors a fuller understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are using this understanding to help create improvement plans and methods to monitor the school's progress towards them.
- Governors have provided considerable support to the interim headteacher in his efforts to ensure that the school complies with legal guidance relating to health and safety and safeguarding. They check the school's compliance frequently. Governors have also helped to fund and secure the improvements to the school's site. Classrooms are brightly decorated, and pupils are working with up-to-date resources.
- Individual governors are taking responsibility for scrutinising different aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding and e-safety. Governors have engaged in relevant training. This, together with support from external consultants, is helping them to understand the standards required and the key questions to ask leaders about the school's work.
- Governors have plans in place to obtain more detailed information about trends in pupils' behaviour, attendance and progress but currently their ability to hold leaders to account for standards in these respects remains limited.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A safeguarding policy is in place that has appropriate regard for legal guidance. Although the school does not have a website at present, the policy is made available to parents on request.
- Leaders have ensured that the correct pre-employment checks are made before recruiting staff. The school's safer recruitment policy is fit for purpose, and policies relating to safeguarding are in line with legal requirements.
- The interim headteacher has ensured that all members of staff have received training in

all aspects of safeguarding at the beginning of the current academic year. Staff were able to tell inspectors about the signs of concern that they would look out for and what they would do about them. The school's records indicate that concerns about pupils are reported and acted upon in a timely and appropriate manner.

- Pupils learn about a variety of risks, and how to minimise these, through their personal, social and health education and other areas of the curriculum. Consequently, they develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too uneven to enable most pupils to make good progress.
- Some teachers do not use their understanding of what pupils already know and can do to plan activities that help them to develop or deepen their knowledge and understanding. At times, this limits the progress made by pupils, particularly the most able, because tasks are not challenging enough.
- Some pupils engage in off-task conversations, call out or become distracted, particularly when they find their work too easy. Progress slows while teachers remind pupils of their expectations and refocus them on their learning.
- In mathematics, pupils sometimes complete work that they find too straightforward. They have insufficient opportunity to apply what they know to real-world problems, or to develop their mathematical reasoning skills.
- Pupils complete pieces of extended writing too infrequently, both in English and other subjects. This limits their ability to develop ideas, explanations, descriptions as well as they might.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, teaching does not always sufficiently promote the development of pupils' subject-specific skills.
- Some teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions or provide feedback that makes clear what it is they need to do to improve, in accordance with the school's policy. As a result, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure across a wide range of subjects. This is enabling pupils to gain knowledge and understanding across a wider range of subjects than they have been exposed to in the past.
- Where pupils learn best, teachers plan activities that build on their prior knowledge and enable them to apply it to new learning and to solve problems. Teachers give pupils time to think before they answer questions that stretch them and extend their learning. During the inspection, for example, younger pupils thought hard about gender stereotypes and developed the ability to challenge these.
- Teachers maintain a strong focus upon ensuring that pupils write clearly and with precision, irrespective of subject. As a result, most older pupils use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately in their written work.
- Pupils benefit from practising times-tables and other mathematical operations daily. This enables them to make calculations quickly.

- Teachers and support staff, including those who are new to the school, are developing positive relationships with those they teach. This helps them to engage pupils who are struggling, so that they do not fall behind.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Older pupils who spoke with inspectors showed a limited understanding of the way in which Britain's democratic system works, or why democracy is important.
- Despite the teaching they have received, some pupils' attitudes show tolerance but not respect for homosexuality.
- The facilities available to pupils are much improved since the previous emergency inspection. Areas such as the toilets and the medical room are clean and comply with the relevant independent school standards. Staff follow daily health and safety routines appropriately.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are able to play outside, each day, at lunchtime by making safe and supervised use of a local park. Arrangements are in place to enable pupils to engage in physical education regularly at a local school. There were no such arrangements in place at the time of the previous standard inspection.
- Appropriate risk assessments are in place that promote pupils' safety when they take part in off-site trips and visits.
- Pupils are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the school and the local community. They are encouraged to show good manners to others and to perform acts of kindness. Most respond readily to this guidance and are polite and welcoming.
- Pupils told inspectors that they are happy to come to school. Most are self-confident, ambitious and willing to work hard.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and the distress that it can cause. Most think that teachers deal with it well when it is reported to them.
- Pupils learn about different risks and how to minimise them, including when using the internet or when cycling, for example. Pupils told inspectors that they usually feel safe in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils disrupt learning when they find activities too easy and this slows the pace of learning.
- Some pupils do not complete their work with the care and attention to detail that they should. At times, tasks are left unfinished and pupils do not respond when teachers remind them to complete it.
- Pupils are punctual. Their attendance is in line with the national average. Very few pupils are persistent non-attenders.

- Pupils conduct themselves well when they move around the school site and follow instructions promptly at lunchtimes when they socialise companionably.
- Pupils told inspectors that serious misbehaviour is very rare. The school's monitoring records support this view.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is too variable. Some pupils, particularly the most able, are not making as much progress as they should because they complete work that is too easy. The school's monitoring information indicates that too many pupils in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 made insufficient progress during the 2017/18 academic year.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment was at or above the national average at the end of key stage 2. Work in older pupils' books demonstrates that most pupils are working at or close to the standard expected by the end of their primary education in English and mathematics. Leaders do not have a sufficiently clear sense of these pupils' starting points to assess whether this represents good progress over time.
- Leaders have recently introduced assessment tests at the start of this school year so that they can measure the progress that all pupils are making over the rest of the school year. Their monitoring indicates that pupils' progress across different subjects is accelerating but that it remains too variable. Scrutiny of pupils' work supports this view.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read widely. They sound out combinations of letters so that they can pronounce unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with confidence and fluency. They develop good skills of comprehension and the ability to make appropriate inferences from different kinds of text.
- Pupils make good progress in the accuracy of their written work and typically use spelling, punctuation and grammar correctly. They can write for different purposes and in a variety of genres. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills when writing at length.
- In mathematics, most pupils develop their understanding well and complete accurate work that evidences their age-appropriate skills. However, pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills are weak.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils typically acquire knowledge and understanding well. However, they are not fully developing the subject-specific skills that they need to work scientifically, or as a historian or geographer, for example.

School details

Unique reference number	131825
DfE registration number	821/6004
Inspection number	10056561

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Proprietor	Olive Tree Primary School Trust
Chair	Abdul-Wadud Ahmed
Headteacher	Abdul-Wadud Ahmed
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,850 to £2,000
Telephone number	01582 416940
Website	No website at present
Email address	admin@olivetreeprimary.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	23–25 May 2017

Information about this school

- Olive Tree Primary School is a small Islamic day school. The school is currently not permitted to admit new pupils because of the restriction notice served upon it by the Secretary of State for Education, under section 116 of the Education Act, on 21 July 2017.
- There are no pupils currently at the school who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use supply staff.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- A new, interim headteacher started at the school in September 2018.
- There have been new members appointed to the governing body since the previous

monitoring inspection. Further appointments are planned.

- Since the 2017 standard inspection, Ofsted has conducted three inspections:
 - 8–9 November 2017: an unannounced emergency inspection was carried out and independent school standards that were considered at that time were not met
 - 28 February – 1 March 2018: an unannounced emergency inspection was carried out and the independent school standards that were considered at that time were not met
 - 4 May 2018: an unannounced emergency inspection was carried out and independent school standards that were considered at the time were met.

Information about this inspection

- This standard inspection was conducted at the request of the Department for Education, which commissioned Ofsted to carry out the inspection earlier in the cycle than previously planned.
- This inspection incorporated information about the school's progress in meeting the independent school standards that were not met at the previous standard inspection and the subsequent unannounced emergency inspections.
- The previous standard inspection was carried out in May 2017, when the school's effectiveness was judged to be inadequate.
- Since that inspection, there have been a number of changes in leadership, governance and the composition of the school's trustees. The current headteacher was appointed in an interim capacity and took up his post in September 2018.
- The inspection included a tour of the school, led by the interim headteacher, visiting each class.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across the school and in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors considered pupils' work during lessons and examined written work in a large proportion of pupils' books to determine their progress over time.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors, pupils and staff, as well as individuals providing support for the school.
- Inspectors reviewed school policies, child protection and safeguarding information, information relating to the curriculum, pupils' progress and behaviour, as well as minutes of meetings and the attendance and admissions registers.
- Too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were received for these to be considered. One written comment provided through Parent View was considered. Inspectors spoke with parents informally during their inspection to take account of their views.

Inspection team

Jason Howard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Randall

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work—
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school—
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9(b) the behaviour policy is implemented effectively;
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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