

Al-Sadiq and Al-Zahra Schools

134 Salusbury Road, London, NW6 6PF

Inspection dates 9–11 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate school

- The school has employed members of staff without obtaining adequate references. Leaders have failed to check whether new staff are subject to prohibition orders barring them from teaching.
- The member of staff with responsibility for child protection has not received appropriate training and is not sufficiently familiar with local safeguarding procedures.
- Procedures for recording and responding to pupils' long-term absences are inconsistent, and do not ensure that children missing from education are safe.
- The school's safeguarding policy does not include provision for allegations against the Principal or headteacher. Also, it does not cover some of the risks to which pupils may be exposed, such as radicalisation or forced marriage. The proprietors do not monitor safeguarding or review the policy.
- The early years provision is inadequate because the school's work to keep children safe is inadequate.
- The early years provision does not adequately cover all areas of learning and does not prepare children sufficiently well for Year 1.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has carried out excellent work with other community and faith groups to promote effective mutual understanding and respect. Pupils are committed to playing a part in local democracy and helping others.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress, achieve well and leave school well prepared for the next stage of their education or careers.
- Pupils are confident and mature. They are proud of their school. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together.
- The school's religious ethos underpins all its activities and creates a clear sense of community and shared purpose.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes develop good relationships with adults and with one another.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 25 lessons taught by 24 teachers in the primary and secondary departments as well as three sessions in the early years provision. They examined samples of pupils' work and listened to them read. They talked to members of the school council and to other pupils.
- They examined school policies, records and other documentation, and held discussions with staff, senior managers and members of the proprietorial body.
- There were 34 responses to the online survey (Parent View). The inspectors considered 38 responses to the staff questionnaire. They spoke to a small number of parents and took into account the responses made by parents directly to the inspection service provider.

Inspection team

Michael Glickman, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Usman Mapara	Additional Inspector
Clementina Olufunke Aina	Additional Inspector
Susan Jackson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Al-Sadiq and Al-Zahra Schools are Islamic faith schools. They are combined schools for boys and girls and are located in the Brondesbury area of the London Borough of Brent. The school is owned by the Al-Khoei Foundation and most of the pupils come from within the Iraqi community. Classes are mixed until Year 3 and thereafter there are separate classes for boys and girls. All but three of the pupils in the early years provision attend full-time.
- The school was opened in 1991 and is registered for 376 pupils. It currently has 407 pupils between the ages of three and 16 years on the roll. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or is looked after by a local authority. Nine pupils speak English as an additional language. The school does not use any off-site training.
- The school aims to 'encourage each child to develop God-consciousness and grow into confident, respectful and proactive citizens who will add value to society'. Pupils follow all areas of the National Curriculum to GCSE level with additional Islamic and Arabic studies.
- The school was last inspected in January 2009.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide pupils with opportunities to engage and participate fully in lessons, in order to achieve their best
 - consistently mark pupils' work so that it shows them what to improve and provide opportunities to act on this advice.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years provision by:
 - accurately checking and recording children's progress so that any gaps in their developing skills can be quickly identified and addressed
 - providing appropriate activities for the less- and more-able children to enable them all to make the best possible progress
 - ensuring that all the required areas of learning are covered in sufficient depth.
- Reduce the sizeable minority of pupils who persistently arrive late at school.
- Ensure leaders and managers implement recruitment procedures that conform to current requirements.
- Ensure that the designated teacher for safeguarding receives suitable training and that leaders obtain and implement the appropriate local safeguarding children board (LSCB) policy.
- Develop the safeguarding policy so that it:
 - includes provision for handling allegations against the headteacher or principal
 - alerts staff to the various risks that pupils may face, including e-safety
- Ensure the Independent School Standards are met in order that the proprietorial board meets its statutory obligations.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards:
 - The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
 - The proprietor must ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraph 23B(1) and 23B(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because senior managers have not ensured that the current requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. They have not ensured that adequate references are obtained before employing staff. For example, some staff have been employed without references and, in other cases, the references are non-specific, and do not show the address or status of the referee. The school has not checked whether applicants are subject to a prohibition order, barring them from teaching.
- The school occupies a sizeable building dating from the early Twentieth Century. There are separate playgrounds and classroom wings for boys and girls, although the early years provision and Key Stage 1 are mixed. Some facilities, such as the information and communications technology (ICT) suite and the gymnasium, are shared. The school's premises are well maintained and all required safety checks have been carried out. There are showers for pupils receiving physical education and adequate external lighting. However, the room for pupils who are unwell in the boys' section of the building lacks a washbasin. The door of the equivalent room for girls cannot be closed if the folding bed provided is in use.
- Senior leaders carry out regular lesson observations to monitor the quality of teaching. Areas for improvement identified are discussed with teachers and their implementation checked. Teachers are offered a range of development opportunities through regular in-service training with visiting experts or via external courses. The Principal is well supported by the headteacher, and the heads of early years, primary and secondary departments. They contribute effectively to improving the quality of teaching and pupil achievement in their departments.
- The school curriculum ensures that pupils make progress in all the required areas of learning. It is broad and balanced, and takes account of an appropriate range of subjects in addition to its stated Islamic aims. It prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain and caters effectively for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders and managers ensure that there is no discrimination and that pupils are treated equally.
- A particular strength of the school is its work developing relationships with other community and faith groups, and the contribution that pupils make to the local community. The school is a member of the Three Faiths Forum and has won an award for its promotion of understanding between Jewish, Christian and Muslim young people. Pupils visit other places of worship and a range of speakers from different backgrounds are brought into the school. Senior pupils are closely involved with the North London branch of London Citizens. They have arranged to host a leadership training programme for their peers in the area in the near future.
- There are elected school councils for boys and girls, which gives pupils experience of the democratic process. Both councils are involved in an impressive range of activities. They have drawn up plans for improvements to the school, including budgets, which have been successfully implemented. They also organise fundraising such as participation in a sponsored walk to raise funds for Syrian refugee children.
- Pupil representatives have recently devised and staged a successful Islamic art exhibition for the entire community, which they intend to hold annually. Council members are confident and articulate, and are gaining valuable skills in organisation, business planning and working with others which prepare them well for the future.
- The school's complaints policy complies with requirements. Parents are provided with all necessary information about the school through its website and via its prospectus.
- A number of parents expressed their opinions through the Parent View website or directly to inspectors. The majority of parents are very positive about the school. However, some feel that it is difficult to communicate their concerns to the school. The school is aware of this through anonymous surveys carried out at parents' evenings and plans to form a parent-teacher association which it hopes will alleviate this problem.

■ The governance of the school:

The school is owned by the Al-Khoei Foundation which sets its general aims and principles. The Secretary General of the Foundation on behalf of the trustees receives regular reports from senior management. He is accessible to parents who have concerns. He is well informed about pupils' achievement.

However, the Foundation has no direct involvement in the running of the school. They are unaware of the school's policies. They do not have an understanding of the quality of teaching, performance data or the arrangements for setting targets for teachers. None of the trustees has responsibility for the

oversight of safeguarding and there is no regular review of the safeguarding policy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. A sizeable minority of pupils are persistently late for school, sometimes up to three times per week. The school has attempted to address this through contact with parents and sanctions. However, this has so far been ineffective.
- The school has a clear behaviour management policy and expectations are made explicit to pupils. A system of rewards, both individual and collective, encourages good work and good behaviour. There is a recording system for poor behaviour with sanctions including detention and internal suspension. Pupils are almost always well behaved in lessons and focus well on the work in hand.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They greet teachers and other adults respectfully as they meet them around the school. Break times are orderly and pupils move through the school quietly, holding doors open for one another. They say that the different groups within the school get on well together. For example, girls from different backgrounds mix socially outside school.
- Daily prayers provide a spiritual focus within the school routine. They are well organised and many pupils pray with devotion. Pupils in the younger classes pray out loud and are beginning to learn how they are expected to conduct themselves.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. The school's safeguarding policy does not meet current requirements. There is no provision for handling allegations against the Principal or the headteacher. No member of the proprietorial body has responsibility for safeguarding. The policy does not alert staff to risks to pupils such as forced marriage or radicalisation. It does not prevent staff and pupils communicating via personal mobiles and email addresses.
- The teacher with responsibility for child protection has not received suitable training and is not sufficiently familiar with the requirements of the post. The school is not using the appropriate LSCB policy. However, members of staff are familiar with the school's safeguarding procedures and know how to report any concerns about pupils.
- There is inconsistency and lack of clarity in the school's recording and handling of extended unauthorised absences. A small number of pupils are sometimes up to two weeks late returning to school at the beginning of term. The school does not always know if they intend to return. Parents occasionally remove pupils during term time and temporarily send them to other schools without the school's knowledge. They are sometimes taken for extended holidays abroad. The school does not report these absences to the local authority. Although it tries to contact parents, it cannot adequately ensure that pupils missing from education are safe.
- The premises are secure and fire safety equipment is professionally maintained. Fire drills are regularly carried out and logged.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that there is almost no bullying. Displays throughout the school remind pupils of how Islam expects them to behave towards others. Pupils and children in the early years provision are well supervised at all times.

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good. This enables pupils to make good progress in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Teachers have a good relationship with their classes. Most lessons ensure all pupils are involved and appropriately challenged in their learning. Teachers make good use of technology to support their teaching. Occasionally, however, teachers are less successful at involving the most- or the least-able pupils. They sometimes seem to lack a sufficiently in-depth knowledge of their subject. They do not always give enough opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves.
- There is some effective marking which identifies points for improvement and then confirms that these improvements have been successfully carried out. However, in some subjects, much of the marking consists of tick marks and praise. It does not show pupils how to improve. Some books have been largely peer- or self-marked, with little teacher input.
- The school provides highly effective support for pupils who join the school speaking English as an additional language (EAL). They are assessed on entry and the aim is to rapidly integrate them into their

class. The EAL team works with the class teacher and parents to draw up a termly individual learning plan. Pupils do not normally require support after their second term in the school, but they are monitored until Year 6.

- The school uses Islamic studies effectively to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils learn about the importance of charitable giving while studying Quranic texts. Other cultures and faiths are covered through, for example, English, art and history, and there is good consideration of creativity and aesthetic appreciation.
- Careers guidance is included within citizenship for boys and girls in Years 7 to 9, and work experience is offered to Year 10 pupils. Former pupils now working in a range of careers address Year 10 and 11 pupils to guide them in their career choices. Volunteers from a business links scheme are also used. Pupils of both genders are ambitious and are considering a wide range of options in higher education, business or employment.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching. Careful analysis of pupils' performance data is used to identify where additional support is necessary. The school recognises that progress often slows in the term following pupils' move into the secondary phase. Steps are being taken to remedy this.
- Most pupils leave school with between 10 and 15 good-quality GCSEs, including English and mathematics. Pupils also have the opportunity to take GCSEs in their home languages.
- Where appropriate, more-able pupils are usually given work which challenges them to achieve further. Most-able pupils are entered for mathematics or science a year early and then take additional GCSEs or AS levels.
- Although they are taught separately from Year 3, boys and girls make similar progress throughout the school. Girls have slightly better results at GCSE, particularly in ICT and science. The school ensures equality of opportunity in subjects offered and standard of teaching. In many cases, the same staff teach both genders and all pupils have access to the same resources.
- Pupils across the school read widely both within class and for pleasure, including classics and modern novels. They are happy to talk about the books they enjoy. Even younger pupils can explain why they enjoy books and make predictions about the plot.
- Pupils who have entered primary school speaking English as an additional language make the same progress as their peers once they are fully integrated into their class. No secondary pupils require EAL support.
- The school uses National Curriculum levels to assess pupils and to track their progress. They are currently evaluating alternative systems to replace this method.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate, because the school's work to keep children safe is inadequate and because all areas of learning are not covered adequately.
- Although all required areas of learning are covered, there are gaps, especially in mathematical development and knowledge of the world. Leaders and managers do not ensure that planning provides activities that are always well matched to children's abilities, especially the most able and those with special educational needs. There are no clear steps being taken to support the less able and challenge the more able. Children are not consistently well prepared for Year 1.
- Children enter the early years provision with a level of skill that is typical for their age. They make reasonable, as opposed to good, progress because teachers' checks do not always identify any gaps in their skills. Assessment records do not identify the next steps children need to take to further develop their skills.
- The majority of children develop reasonable early writing skills. However, most writing is copying rather than making use of their developing knowledge. Most can recognise simple two- and three-letter words. Children develop an interest in reading through story sessions and opportunities to borrow books from the library.
- Children have many opportunities to use media for creative expression. As a result, they are happy and behave well. Most children are able to express their creative ideas. They use print, arts and crafts, and dress up as their favourite characters. There is good promotion of health, through constant access to drinking water and healthy fruits at snack time.

- Positive adult support and engagement have enabled the children to settle well into daily routines. There is a good level of supervision which keeps children safe. They respond well to adults' care and support, and communicate freely with them. Children enjoy one another's company and play cooperatively together. Occasional squabbles over sharing are promptly resolved by adults.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement
	Grade 1	Outstanding
	Grade 2	Good
	Grade 3	Requires improvement
	Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	101576
Inspection number	452042
DfE registration number	304/6072

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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.

Type of school	Islamic faith school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Number of part time pupils	3
Proprietor	Al-Khoei Foundation
Chair	Seyed Saheb Khoei
Principal	M Movahedi
Date of previous school inspection	January 2009
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,700–£5,100
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