

# Al-Sadiq and Al-Zahra Schools

134 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6PF

## Inspection dates

25–27 September 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietor and school leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Boys and girls from Year 4 onwards are segregated by sex for learning, breaktimes and lunchtimes. This is unlawful sex discrimination, contrary to the Equality Act 2010.
- Teaching in the early years and in the primary phase is too variable. The teaching of phonics and handwriting is inconsistent.
- The early years does not prepare children adequately for the next stage of their education. Leaders do not ensure that staff use assessment effectively to support children’s learning.
- The quality of leadership and management is inconsistent. Sometimes, leaders’ actions do not result in the improvements intended.

### The school has the following strengths

- There is strong provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- Pupils make sustained progress in key stages 3 and 4 as a result of stronger leadership and teaching.
- Teachers ensure that the curriculum contributes well to pupils’ personal development.
- Teachers of Islamic studies are clear about what they want pupils to learn and ask effective questions.
- Pupils typically behave well in and out of lessons.

### 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. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that leaders' plans for improvement include measures of success and timescales which reflect the urgency of necessary actions
  - ensuring that leaders are held to account for all aspects of the school's work.
- Follow through the steps necessary to ensure that the school's arrangements are compliant with the Equality Act 2010 by ceasing the practice of segregating pupils by sex.
- Take urgent action to secure the necessary improvements to the early years so that children make consistent good progress from their starting points.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching improves, particularly in the early years and the primary phase, so that pupils make good progress by:
  - improving the accuracy of the teaching of phonics, and checking that all adults implement the agreed approaches to reading
  - insisting that teachers share high expectations of pupils' ability to write independently
  - implementing one agreed approach to the teaching of handwriting.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The proprietor has not ensured that leaders are taking the steps necessary to make sure that all the independent school standards in Parts 1 and 8 of the regulations are met. As a result, the school's request for a change to the number and age range of pupils is not recommended.
- Leaders have tackled concerns identified at the last progress monitoring visit. As a result, the previously unmet standards are now met.
- The school continues to operate a policy of almost complete segregation by sex from Year 4 onwards. Pupils of the opposite sex are not allowed to mix in lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. However, girls and boys take part in some school visits together. The policy constitutes direct sex discrimination contrary to the Equality Act 2010. Ofsted considers that the segregation practised does not meet the test for positive action under section 158 of the Equality Act 2010. This continuing breach of the Equality Act 2010 arising from sex segregation has been taken into account in relation to the inspection judgements made. Leaders have sought advice from the regulating authority about how to comply with the law and, as a result, have feasible plans to de-amalgamate the school by September 2019.
- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is good across the school. Plans for improvement are too vague or have been implemented poorly. Some leaders are more successful than others in holding teachers to account and checking on the impact of their work to improve pupils' learning.
- The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn across all the subjects required by the independent school standards. In some subjects, such as Islamic studies, clear learning intentions and effective questioning enable all pupils, including the most able, to benefit from an appropriate curriculum. In other subjects, particularly English, the quality of the curriculum is variable across the school and pupils do not learn in depth, especially in key stages 1 and 2.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural education is a relative strength of the school. Plans to strengthen and improve this aspect of the curriculum have been implemented well. As a result, pupils of all ages benefit from a wide range of opportunities to deepen their understanding and knowledge of British institutions, and a range of cultures. For example, pupils in key stage 3 can explain how a visit to Samuel Johnson's house has helped them to learn about the development of the English dictionary. Pupils understand the main features of Judaism, as a result of their links with Jewish schools and the local synagogue.
- Leaders ensure that the few pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well in their social and emotional development. However, the guidance these pupils receive to help them make progress in learning specific to different subjects is more variable.
- Parents, carers and pupils are typically positive about the leadership and management of the school. All parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, indicated that they would recommend the school to other parents.

## Governance

- The proprietor is represented by a sole individual who regularly visits the school. Written records are kept of his discussions with leaders. This ensures that the proprietor is kept informed about the work of the school. Close attention is paid to the quality and completeness of checks on the suitability of staff. However, the checks that the proprietor makes on achievement in order to offer challenge to leaders are underdeveloped.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding records and checks on the suitability of staff reflect the most recent guidance, and are well maintained. Leaders ensure that staff are clear about their responsibilities for helping keep children safe. They provide regular training and updates, which include reference to themes that have relevance to the school community.
- Leaders have acted effectively to strengthen the checks made to vet visiting speakers and those providing training. They have paid particular attention to improving the quality and extent of support for teachers and pupils in understanding the 'Prevent' duty.
- Parents and pupils typically agree that leaders do a good job of maintaining a safe school, and ensuring that pupils learn how to recognise and respond to risks. For example, some parents indicated that they had chosen the school because of how well it promotes pupils' well-being.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- There is a stark contrast in the quality of teaching in different parts of the school. Teaching in the secondary phase is consistently effective in helping pupils sustain good progress. In the primary phase and the early years, the quality of teaching is variable and sometimes weak.
- Teachers do not follow an agreed approach when teaching pupils to read. There are inaccuracies in some phonics teaching, which have not been picked up by leaders. As a result, younger pupils make variable progress and, in some cases, they are poorly prepared for key stage 2. Teachers do ensure that pupils develop an enjoyment of reading and make use of the well-stocked library to extend their reading.
- Teachers in the primary phase do not typically expect enough of pupils' writing. The lack of an agreed approach to the teaching of handwriting limits pupils' progress. The quality of pupils' writing deteriorates when they work in subjects other than English, particularly in key stage 2. This is because teachers and additional adults do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length.
- In the secondary phase, teaching across a range of subjects ensures that pupils acquire a broad range of skills and knowledge. Specialist teaching in the secondary phase is well informed by teachers' secure subject knowledge.
- Mathematics teaching is effective across the whole school. However, teachers could do more to challenge the most able pupils to apply their skills and deepen their understanding in some classes.
- Pupils make good progress in Islamic studies because teachers are clear about what they

expect pupils to learn. They inspire pupils to think deeply about what their religion means in their everyday lives. In addition, pupils acquire secure knowledge about other faiths.

- Pupils who arrive at the school with little or no English are well supported in their learning by teachers and additional adults.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils build on their prior learning to enrich their understanding of British institutions, such as democracy and the rule of law. For example, they debate topical or contentious issues and use voting as a method of expressing their opinions. They consider ideas which motivate and challenge them. Recent examples include a debate on whether fiction can encourage sexism, and a topic focused on considering how sporting events might affect relations between countries.
- The curriculum helps pupils understand different types of bullying. Pupils consider all of the protected characteristics when learning about discriminatory behaviour. Pupils are provided with memorable experiences to help them learn why some characteristics are protected in law. This enables them to develop respect and tolerance from a well-informed position.
- The well-designed curriculum enables pupils to gain a secure understanding of British institutions.
- Leaders' and teachers' attention to current issues and guidance helps pupils to develop independence and confidence when online.
- Secondary-aged pupils receive a wide range of guidance about careers and further training. All pupils are offered a work experience placement. Pupils also develop knowledge about work, such as an understanding of the 'living wage'. This aspect of the curriculum prepares pupils well for their future lives and contributes to their personal development.
- Leaders ensure that the premises manager is held closely to account for carrying out necessary assessments of risks and checks on the premises. A full-time school nurse is employed to support the welfare of pupils, keep parents up to date with health issues and ensure that the first aid policy is implemented.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are typically courteous and hard working. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.
- The records leaders keep of sanctions for poor behaviour demonstrate that bullying and other discriminatory behaviours are rare. Most pupils and parents confirm that the school does a good job of ensuring that respect and tolerance are typical features of behaviour.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that the behaviour policy is understood and implemented across the school. Leaders told inspectors that association between boys and girls during the school day does not lead to sanctions and that this is clear to pupils. As a result, the standard in Part 3 of the regulations relating to the behaviour policy is

now met.

- Pupils attend well. Overall, attendance is similar to other schools nationally. Persistent absence rates have lowered in the past school year. Leaders have been successful in helping parents understand why it is important for their children to attend school regularly and not to travel abroad during term time.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Current pupils make insufficient progress in key stages 1 and 2 from their starting points in reading and writing. Pupils' progress across a range of subjects is variable. Their current work in some subjects provides clear evidence that staff have low expectations.
- In mathematics, teaching is more effective than in English and enables most pupils to make good progress over time. However, more boys reach the expected standard by the end of key stage 2 than girls. The most able pupils do not deepen or enrich their mathematical learning sufficiently in key stages 1 and 2. Their progress improves in the secondary phase of the school.
- Year 11 pupils' work demonstrates that they are typically on track to achieve well by the end of key stage 4 across a range of subjects. Boys achieve as well as girls in the secondary phase of the school. All pupils who left Year 11 in 2018 progressed to further education or training. Their achievement in GCSE examinations represents good progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' learning in Islamic studies enables them to understand how to apply the principles of their religion to their everyday lives. Most pupils acquire the knowledge and skills which leaders intend them to. The most able pupils studying Arabic achieve very well, some acquiring advanced qualifications one or two years earlier than would be usually expected.
- The small proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make similar progress from their starting points to that of others in the school.

### Early years provision

### Inadequate

- Children make inadequate progress in the early years. Leaders' plans to tackle specific weaknesses, especially in training staff, are vague, and intended actions have yet to take place. As a result, the use of assessment to plan effective learning for children remains poor.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of all children from their different starting points. Teaching staff do not gather or use information about children's learning well enough to plan activities or identify how to challenge the most able.
- Children arrive in the early years with skills which are typical for their age. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year declined in 2018, and was below the national average. Year 1 pupils' work demonstrates that the early years has not prepared them well enough for key stage 1.
- Teachers and other staff do not help children to read and write effectively. The accuracy with which adults teach phonics is variable. Staff do not expect enough of children when asking them to write or develop their handwriting skills. Leaders have not ensured that

additional training is provided for staff who need it.

- Children behave well and learn to cooperate with one another. Adults provide encouragement and helpful advice, which enables children to become increasingly independent.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Leaders are clear about their responsibilities for maintaining safe premises. The ratio of staff to children meets and often exceeds statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding policy is well understood by staff, and that specific training, such as that required for paediatric first aid, is kept up to date.

## School details

Unique reference number	101576
DfE registration number	304/6072
Inspection number	10038154

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	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Number of part-time pupils	27
Proprietor	Al Khoei Foundation
Headteacher	S A Khoei
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,700 to £5,550
Telephone number	020 7372 7706/6760
Email address	<a href="mailto:alsadiq@btconnect.com">alsadiq@btconnect.com</a> / <a href="mailto:info@al-sadiqal-zahraschools.co.uk">info@al-sadiqal-zahraschools.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	9–11 December 2014

## Information about this school

- Al-Sadiq and Al-Zahra Schools is an independent day school for boys and girls in the London borough of Brent. The school is registered for up to 376 pupils and has an Islamic ethos.
- At the time of the inspection, boys and girls are segregated for lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes from Year 4 onwards. This is unlawful sex discrimination contrary to the Equality Act 2010. Girls and boys take part in some school visits together.
- This policy of segregating pupils by sex causes detriment to pupils as they are denied the opportunity to be educated alongside others of the opposite sex. In 2017, the Court of Appeal affirmed that strict segregation by sex in schools is a direct sex discrimination contrary to the Equality Act 2010. Following this judgment, the Secretary of State for Education stated that schools which segregate by sex should be given time to cease the



practice. Ofsted explained that following September 2018, it would take any ongoing breach of the Equality Act 2010 arising from sex segregation into account in relation to key inspection judgements made. Therefore, this continuing breach of the Equality Act 2010 has been taken into account in the judgements for this school.

- The school occupies premises which were built as a school. The early years setting occupies the same site. No other premises are used.
- A very small proportion of pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. Nearly all speak English as an additional language.
- There are 57 children in the early years, 27 of whom attend part time.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in December 2014, when the school was judged to be inadequate. At the school's most recent progress monitoring inspection in January 2018, a number of unmet independent school standards were identified.
- The school was subsequently required to submit an action plan to the Department for Education, which was evaluated by Ofsted as acceptable in May 2018.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of lessons in all parts of the school and across a range of subjects. Many observations were carried out jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's plans for improvement, records related to behaviour, safeguarding documents and correspondence between the school and the Department for Education.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' work. They spoke to pupils in all key stages.
- Inspectors considered 51 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and six written responses from parents. Inspectors also spoke informally with several parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors incorporated a progress monitoring inspection into this full inspection. They also included an inspection in response to the school's request for a material change to extend the number and age range for which the school is registered.

## Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Raj Mehta

Ofsted Inspector

Sean Flood

Ofsted 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.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are:
  - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
  - 3(j) does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the 2010 Act.

#### **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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