

School inspection report

4 to 6 February 2025

Al-Sadiq School

126 Chevening Road

Brent

London

NW6 6TP

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and those with governance responsibilities understand their duty to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted. Their decisions reflect the school's aims and religious ethos, with appropriate consideration of risk and the requirements of equality legislation. Leaders ensure that the school meets the Standards.
2. Leaders ensure that policies are up to date and understood by staff, although, prior to the inspection, they had not been vigilant in ensuring that the school's website had all the required and up-to-date information for parents. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.
3. The curriculum provides appropriately for the needs of pupils across a range of subject disciplines. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress overall, but the rate of that progress is variable over time and across different subjects in the senior school. Leaders have an insecure and incomplete grasp of assessment data; as a result, they are unable to use it effectively to support improvement in academic standards.
4. The learning needs department provides helpful support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that they make good progress from their starting points. Those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are effectively supported when required during lessons.
5. There is a suitable extra-curricular programme for the primary pupils but that for secondary pupils is extremely limited.
6. There is a well-constructed personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme that successfully meets the school's aims of encouraging pupils' understanding of the importance of mutual respect and tolerance. However, careers education is not consistently provided across secondary year groups and is limited in scope.
7. The shared faith of all members of the school community underpins leaders' decision-making and ensures that pupils develop firmly grounded spiritual and moral values. These are supported further in suitable relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons. As a result, pupils grow in self-knowledge, self-confidence and empathy for others.
8. Pupils understand and respect the school's behavioural expectations, including the unacceptability of bullying, and suitable numbers of staff are on duty throughout the day. Leaders monitor attendance and follow up any absenteeism.
9. Safeguarding procedures are well embedded in the school and staff suitably trained. Recruitment processes are robust.
10. The site is secure and the premises well maintained. Health and safety requirements are met.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the collection, analysis and use of assessment data to improve senior pupils' academic standards
- monitor the quality of teaching and learning more effectively so as to remedy variations in pupils' progress over time and across different subjects
- ensure that parents consistently have access as required to accurate and current versions of the school's policies
- strengthen the careers programme so that it provides helpful guidance for pupils on a wide range of career possibilities throughout the senior school
- take steps to create an extra-curricular programme that engages secondary pupils and enables them to develop their skills and interests beyond the classroom.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Responsibility for governance oversight lies with the trustee of the charitable foundation. Senior leaders work closely with him to ensure that decision-making is closely aligned with the school's aims and religious ethos. Leaders understand and fulfil their duty to ensure the active promotion of pupils' wellbeing in all areas. Leaders' decisions have ensured that Standards are met, although leadership is less robust and effective in some areas than in others. Leaders have evaluated the school's work in a number of areas, but this analysis is not rigorous in identifying areas for development or the actions needed to secure improvement.
12. Leaders understand their duty to ensure that they and all staff have appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities and promote pupils' wellbeing, including with regard to their academic development. Leaders have applied their understanding well in the primary sector, so that decisions about the curriculum there have supported the pupils to make consistently good progress.
13. Leaders have not been rigorous in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching in the senior school. They have an incomplete and insecure understanding of the data collected on senior pupils' progress. Leaders have not discussed or made decisions about how to rectify the variations in the rate of senior pupils' progress and attainment over time and across different subjects.
14. Leaders regularly send grade sheets and reports to parents so that they are well informed of their child's learning. However, leaders have not been vigilant in providing parents with accurate information on required policies, so that prior to the inspection, all the policies on the school's website were out of date. However, leaders have made sure that they keep staff informed of changing statutory guidance on issues of safeguarding and pupils' wellbeing, that policies have been promptly updated and staff are well trained in implementing them in practice. Leaders published updated and accurate policies on the school's website during the inspection, so that all the required information is now available to parents.
15. Leaders and trustees have a firm understanding of risk and have taken appropriate actions in response. These have included enhanced security measures and training for staff in creating comprehensive risk assessments for trips so that potential risks are identified and mitigating action taken. Risk assessments take into account the needs of individual pupils, for example by ensuring there is careful monitoring of allergens in school meals.
16. Leaders make sure that the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) are met. They actively promote pupils' awareness of the need for tolerance and respect of all, including of people's specific protected characteristics, such as race, religion and sex, which are protected by law. There is an appropriate accessibility plan for improving access to the full curriculum and school life for those with a disability. Links are made with external agencies including the local authority and the police as necessary.
17. There is a suitable procedure for managing parental complaints. Leaders' practice of being available to parents at the beginning and end of the school day enables them to hear and manage any concerns swiftly and seek an early resolution.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

18. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. The curriculum is broad and meets the needs of all pupils. It does not discriminate and consistently promotes respect and tolerance. Children in Reception experience a rich and varied range of activities that support their learning. Pupils in the primary school grow in understanding in a wide range of subjects. In the secondary school, the pupils follow a curriculum which covers all the required areas of learning effectively. It follows the framework of the national curriculum and extends it with lessons on Arabic and the Qur'an, reflecting the school's aim to promote the pupils' academic and spiritual development.
20. Pupils core skills develop over time. In Reception classes, children's understanding of the sounds that letters make develops well. Pupils develop their oracy skills effectively and discuss and argue their viewpoints confidently. Numeracy skills progress well. Children in Reception manipulate number bonds up to ten and senior school pupils apply their mathematical knowledge confidently in science lessons. Pupils use everyday computer applications and learn to code. Pupils express their creativity in their artwork and their singing.
21. The learning needs department creates individual plans for pupils who have SEND and shares appropriate strategies with teachers. Staff regularly assess these pupils' progress against their targets. The effective support provided enables pupils who have SEND to make good progress from their starting points overall, although the rate of that progress is variable.
22. All pupils speak English as an additional language and the majority are either bilingual or fluent English speakers. The few pupils who need help in developing their English are well supported and make good progress with their English. Teachers who speak the same home language are used to support particular pupils in the primary school, and employ suitable strategies, such as word banks of subject specific terminology, for older pupils when appropriate.
23. In Reception and the primary school, teachers have good subject knowledge and use a range of strategies and activities that engage pupils' interest so that they become enthusiastic, active learners. As a result, the pupils in these parts of the school make consistently good progress. Children consistently reach or exceed nationally expected levels of development by the time they finish the Reception year.
24. Formal and informal assessment processes in the primary school are thorough. Leaders use this data to adapt the curriculum when needed, such as changing the writing scheme to rectify an identified weakness in pupils' writing. In the primary school, teachers use assessment information in planning their lessons, so that all groups of pupils are supported to make consistently good progress.
25. Staff conduct baseline assessments when pupils join the senior school. They set targets and track pupils' progress by tests at the end of term. However, there are large gaps in the data collected so that senior leaders have an insecure and incomplete picture of pupils' progress over time and across subjects.
26. In the senior school, some teachers plan lessons that generate pupils' interest so that they become curious, self-motivated learners. Others use a limited range of activities and teaching strategies which allow pupils to be passive and do not encourage them to think and learn for themselves. The quality of the feedback to pupils is inconsistent. Teachers of some subjects provide clear written and verbal guidance on what is needed to improve. In others, marking and feedback is not so

informative, leaving pupils unclear about what is needed. Variation in the quality of teaching and feedback impact on the consistency of pupils' progress over time and across subjects, so that pupils' results in other subjects are not consistently as high as those in English and mathematics.

27. There is a suitable range of recreational clubs for primary pupils that enable them to develop skills such as coding or baking. However, leaders discontinued senior clubs following poor uptake, on their understanding that pupils are reluctant to stay after school. This means that there are currently minimal recreational opportunities for senior pupils to pursue their interests and develop their skills further.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 28. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

29. Pupils learn that equality legislation protects the rights of those with disabilities and of minority groups. Teachers use teaching opportunities to reinforce pupils' understanding that respecting others' rights to hold different opinions on issues such as sexuality and marriage is enshrined in British law and does not compromise their own religious beliefs. As a result, pupils understand that tolerance and respect for all, regardless of differences of ability, gender or religion, are fundamentally important in modern British society.
30. The curriculum structure helps pupils to develop a firm awareness of a spiritual dimension to life. Children in Reception learn the history of Islam through stories. Lessons for older pupils begin with a short prayer in Arabic. Assemblies with readings from the Qur'an, led by pupils, and daily prayer times further support pupils' understanding of the role of faith in their lives. The school is part of an inter-faith community and pupils visit other places of worship, including Christian churches and Jewish synagogues. Such visits support the pupils' understanding and respect for the common spiritual values that faiths share, regardless of differences of belief.
31. Leaders' commitment to creating a kind and supportive school community is reflected in the warm, friendly and encouraging classroom atmosphere created by teachers, which in turn helps the pupils to grow in self-confidence and self-assurance. The children and pupils in the primary school are confident and happy. Pupils of secondary age are self-assured, talking confidently and honestly about their own strengths, weaknesses and ambitions.
32. Pupils learn about the importance of diet, healthy food choices and exercise. Children in Reception develop their physical skills in physical education (PE) lessons as well as in play on the climbing frame and slides. Older pupils develop their physical skills and understanding of tactics, such as in football, in PE classes.
33. The well-structured PSHE programme includes discussion of lifestyle balance and the importance of mental health and emotional wellbeing. Staff encourage children in Reception and the primary school to reflect on their emotions and how to manage difficult feelings. Sessions for older pupils include how to manage conflict and the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse.
34. The relationships and sex education lessons, taught as part of PSHE, ensure that pupils are given the information they need as they mature. Children and younger pupils are taught to respect their own and others' bodies and personal boundaries. Lessons for pupils in the secondary school include information on sensitive issues such as contraception and discussions on the importance of respect and honesty in healthy committed relationships and marriage.
35. Leaders and staff communicate the school's behavioural expectations well throughout the school. Behaviour management is fair and effective. Behaviour in lessons and in free time is uniformly respectful and considerate. Serious incidents of misbehaviour are rare and leaders deal with these suitably in accordance with the policy.
36. The anti-bullying policy is effective. PSHE lessons consider the dangers of coercive relationships, unhealthy peer pressure and issues of cyber bullying, and as a result pupils clearly state their

understanding that any form of bullying is unacceptable. Such instances are rare. Any that happen are recorded and appropriate sanctions applied.

37. The school maintains suitable admissions and attendance registers. Leaders provide parents with information on the current school attendance policy, which reflects current statutory guidance. Leaders ensure that should a pupil's attendance cause concern, parents are swiftly contacted and support strategies put in place. The school informs the local authority should any pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition.
38. The school site is well maintained and there are suitable fire prevention measures in place. Health and safety checks are carried out in a timely manner and leaders take action as necessary. Arrangements for first aid are thorough. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid and any administration of first aid or medication follows suitable procedures. There are always appropriate numbers of staff on duty to supervise pupils and access to the school is secure.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 39. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

40. The curriculum provides pupils with an understanding of the human and social forces which have shaped the modern world. Pupils become conscious of issues such as climate change. For example, science lessons for primary pupils include an exploration of ocean pollution and older pupils consider issues of sustainability.
41. Pupils engage with social issues that affect those with particular needs. Primary pupils have written to the local council about limited access to public transport for people with disabilities. Pupils' social conscience is reflected in the charities they support; for example, pupils create care packages for a homeless charity. They also raise funds for charities, including one aimed at medical research and another for an orphanage in Iraq.
42. Leaders encourage and enable pupils to develop their sense of responsibility towards others. Children in Reception help tidy up after activities, while older pupils take on roles as monitors or members of the pupil council. Prefects are responsible for overseeing behaviour in corridors as well as helping organise fund-raising activities.
43. The curriculum encourages the pupils to appreciate their own and other cultures and to consider the impact of prejudice and discrimination for religious and other reasons. Children in Reception learn how to write names in English and in Arabic. Art lessons include calligraphy alongside the study of Western artistic traditions. Curriculum trips have included visits to theatres and museums.
44. The PSHE scheme of work includes some units on financial matters, for example discussion of budgeting, saving and management of debt. Older pupils learn about the financial impact of taxation and national insurance deductions on net salaries.
45. The PSHE curriculum includes some careers education for pupils of secondary age but it is limited in some year groups. Pupils in Year 10 are expected to arrange some work experience and those in Year 11 are helped in applying for colleges. They attend a careers day when members of the local community talk to pupils about possible future careers. The careers programme, however, is not comprehensive and gives pupils only limited guidance or exposure to information about the wide range of possible career paths.
46. Teaching encourages pupils to reflect on the importance of legal structures and the role of the courts, so that they understand the importance of the law in creating a civilised and safe society. They learn about the concept of democracy, the importance of voting and the work of Parliament. They experience democracy at first hand in the work of the pupil council and in mock elections.
47. The curriculum provides pupils with clear and unambiguous teaching on the principles on which to base their lives. From their earliest days in the school, pupils are taught that they are expected to behave with honesty, empathy, kindness and respect for others. The curriculum makes clear the alignment between Islamic values and those that are fundamental to modern British society. As a result, pupils are well prepared to become responsible Muslim British citizens.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

48. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

49. Safeguarding procedures are well embedded and understood across the school. The proprietor has undertaken safeguarding training and understands his responsibilities for oversight of the school's policy and procedures. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) prepares a thorough safeguarding report to support the trustee's annual safeguarding review.
50. The safeguarding team includes a number of deputy DSLs and all members of the safeguarding team are suitably trained for their role. The DSL ensures that the safeguarding policy consistently reflects current statutory guidance and any changes made to it, and that all staff are rigorously and regularly trained in safeguarding. The DSL checks their understanding by regular quizzes, and questions on safeguarding are included in all staff meetings. Recent training for staff has included consideration of mental health issues and discussions on being alert to behavioural changes that might suggest a pupil is troubled.
51. There are stringent monitoring and filtering systems to support pupils' safe access of the internet, while not limiting their ability use the internet to support their education. These systems are regularly tested to ensure their effectiveness.
52. Staff know the importance of recording any low-level concerns about the behaviour of adults in the school. They understand their responsibility to create an atmosphere in which the safeguarding and wellbeing of the pupils are given paramount importance.
53. The DSL engages with local agencies, including the local area safeguarding partnership members and the police as necessary. The DSL keeps suitable and secure safeguarding records and shares information appropriately should a pupil transfer to or join from another school.
54. The school carries out all required safer recruitment checks before any individual is allowed to start work at the school. The dates and outcomes of the checks are recorded accurately in the single central record of appointments.
55. Teaching for pupils on how to protect themselves has included presentations from visiting speakers on keeping safe while travelling to and from school and on the risks of extremism on the internet. Pupils know they can turn to any member of staff for advice and help as needed. They may also use a link on the school's electronic communication system to report a concern anonymously. As a result, pupils feel secure and confident that the school is committed to their care.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 56. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

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| School | Al-Sadiq School |
| Department for Education number | 304/6072 |
| Registered charity number | 802000 |
| Address | Al-Sadiq School 126 Chevening Road Brent London NW6 6TP |
| Phone number | 020 7372 6760 |
| Email address | alsadiq@asazs.co.uk |
| Website | www.alsadiq.asazs.co.uk |
| Proprietor | Al Khoei Benevolent Foundation |
| Chair | Dr Sayed Mesebahi |
| Headteacher | Mr Seyed Khoei |
| Age range | 4 to 16 |
| Number of pupils | 137 |
| Date of previous inspection | 23 to 25 March 2022 |

Information about the school

57. Al-Sadiq School is an Islamic independent day school in Brent, London. It is co-educational until pupils complete Year 3 and is for male pupils only from Year 4 to Year 11. Governance oversight is provided by the trustee of the charitable foundation which owns the school. The school has three sections. Male and female pupils are educated together in the primary section of the school between the ages of 4 and 8 years, at which point female pupils transfer to the linked Al-Zahra school and male pupils aged 8 to 11 years continue in the primary section of the school. The senior section is for male pupils aged 11 to 16.
58. There are 11 children in the early years, comprising one Reception class. The class has its own space and playground within the main school building.
59. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
60. The school has identified English as an additional language for all pupils.
61. The school states its aims are to create a positive, caring community within which to promote the academic and spiritual development of pupils so that they become caring and law-abiding citizens who understand their responsibilities to themselves and to British society. Its stated values, drawing on its faith, emphasise the importance of integrity, honesty and mutual respect.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 February 2025

62. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

63. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- discussions with the trustee
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

64. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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