

Mrs Someera Butt  
Head teacher  
Al-Noor Primary School  
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8<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Dear Mrs Butt

Thank you for your welcome and hospitality when I visited your school on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

Before I came, you sent me some useful and interesting information, including up-to-date versions of the School Information and Evaluation Forms (SIEFs) for the whole school and for the early years foundation stage (EYFS). When I arrived, I observed the early morning tag rugby session in the park across the road from the school, in which all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 participated enthusiastically.

During the day, I had discussions with you, with the deputy head, the assistant head, the Arabic teacher, the Qur'an teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). I made short visits to lessons in each class covering a range of subjects including literacy, numeracy, Arabic, Islamic studies, PE, PSHE and indoor and outdoor play in the EYFS. I heard the pupils in Year 6 practising a nasheed for the graduation event that was due to take place on the evening of my visit, attended by the leader of Redbridge Borough Council as well as by parents. I looked at the single central record of the checks that the school makes on staff, trustees and volunteers and was pleased to see that it is full and comprehensive and kept up to date conscientiously. I attended early afternoon prayers where the staff and the pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 pray together with reverence and devotion. Before I left, I had a meeting to share my findings with the senior leadership team and the chair of the trustees.

As I went round the school, I was impressed by the consistency of the approaches to teaching, learning and discipline that I found in all the classes I visited. All lessons are well planned, to a common format, and carefully prepared with appropriate differentiation. Pupils respond well and stay on task, showing interest and enjoyment. Their behaviour is well managed with frequent and effective use of praise and encouragement. There are teaching assistants in all classes who are well deployed and make an important contribution to the pupils' learning, giving extra challenge to faster learners as well as support for slower learners. Speaking and listening skills are

developed well and good use is made of the frequent opportunities for paired discussion.

The teaching of Arabic is particularly lively and effective. The teacher makes imaginative use of a wide range of resources, and together with his assistant models dialogue for pupils in an amusing manner. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace with plenty of variety, engaging the pupils' interests and enabling them to grow in confidence as they develop their skills, notably in speaking and listening.

The play activities in the EYFS are well structured. On the day of my visit, many of them related to the theme of the seaside, building on the pupils' enthusiasm following a visit to Southend earlier in the week. The recent relocation of the EYFS outside play area, so that it is easily accessible from both the Reception and Year 1 classrooms, makes it a natural extension to the classroom. Pupils also benefit from using the whole playground, which has been imaginatively redesigned to include decking, a grassed area, a pond and containers for growing fruit, vegetables and flowers. The development of play activities has benefitted from advice and support from the local authority (LA).

The curriculum is well planned and coherent. It consists of all the subjects of the National Curriculum, except for music, taught by class teachers together with Islamic studies, Qur'an and Arabic taught by specialist teachers. The specialist teachers work closely with the class teachers and all members of staff adopt common approaches. While planning is thorough, there is a welcome willingness to modify plans when circumstances require. For example, in response to the recent shocking events in Woolwich, Islamic studies lessons changed focus to deal with the issues involved. The school also put up a poster in a ground floor window facing the busy street saying 'United we stand against extremism.'

The success of the Nasheed Club and the musical nature of Qur'anic recitation, indicate that the school could teach music in all classes without going against traditional Islamic values, if time could be found for regular music lessons.

In an interesting curricular development, Year 6 pupils have benefited from two imaginatively planned focused weeks during this academic year, that have enabled them to apply their skills in realistic contexts, acting as journalists in one project and as forensic investigators in another. I am pleased to hear that the school intends to develop the curriculum further by planning similar projects in several year groups in the future.

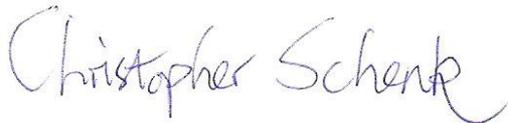
My discussion with the experienced and knowledgeable SENCO, as well as my classroom observations, showed that the procedures to identify and support pupils with special educational needs are well established and consistently implemented. While the number of pupils identified is relatively small, the range of needs is wide. The school receives good support from health agencies and growing support from the LA.

Some welcome improvements have been made to the building, including a new library and the developments of the playground referred to above. However, the issue identified in the last inspection report, that many classrooms have very limited space, has not yet been addressed. On the day of my visit, which was warm and rather

muggy, ventilation was a problem in several classrooms, notably Year 2. The trustees are aware of the issue and I hope that a solution will be found in the near future.

My brief visit to Al-Noor demonstrates clearly that the strengths of the school are solidly established. As a result, I have no hesitation in recommending to the Department of Education, to whom this letter will be copied, that the next full inspection does not need to take place until 2016. The SIEFs show that the school's self-evaluation is detailed, thorough and constructive and that you are always seeking ways of making further improvements. I wish you all the best in this endeavour.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher Schenk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Christopher Schenk  
BSI Lead Inspector