



Dear parents and carers,

July 2020

As we begin the start of another great week, I have some very exciting news for you. In March, we were part of a quality assurance review. This involved three independent reviewers (one of which is an Ofsted inspector) coming into school for two days and exploring and interrogating our provision. This was perfect timing for us as a school as it was eight months after our Ofsted visit and it was a real opportunity to showcase what we've been up to. Please find below the review team's findings:

## Leadership at all levels

- Leaders express a **clear shared ambition** for the continuing improvement and success of the school. The values of 'peace, unity and equality' permeate all areas and are well understood by stakeholders
- Pupils benefit from a **broad and balanced curriculum**, which is well-considered and structured for progression. The structure of curriculum overviews is research- informed and includes clear identification of subject knowledge. Implementation is highly inclusive and framed by a determination that barriers to learning can be robustly addressed.
- The school's commitment to the provision of high quality Islamic and Qur'anic education is unwavering. Islamic Studies is thoughtfully embedded in the curriculum and all children learn Arabic. **Daily prayer is an established routine** for Key Stage 2 children and the whole school participates in weekly Friday prayers.
- Leaders' strategic work on reading is multi-layered. The promotion of reading for pleasure and instruction is achieved through a wide range of initiatives including author visits and a redesigned school library. Pupils and their families benefit from the opportunity to attend book fairs, which include access to Islamic texts. High quality books are visible around school and at the heart of the dynamic curriculum.
- Leaders have established an appropriate **quality assurance framework** that ensures that the strengths and areas for development in the curriculum are sharply identified and well understood.
- Pupils benefit from opportunities to experience a range of **wider curriculum trips and visits**. Partnerships with local museums and businesses ensure that pupils are encouraged to think about future career possibilities and their potential contribution to society.
- Governance has recently been **strengthened**. A comprehensive induction programme is supported by the trust's chief operating officer who is also a national leader of governance.
- Leaders have established a **comprehensive digital strategy**. Pupils in Years 1 and 5 benefit from the use of 1:1 iPads in lessons. In English, pupils receive verbal feedback through the Showbie platform. Pupils are developing online portfolios and benefit from a range of digital applications including Times Table Rockstars and Spelling Shed. The computing leader is currently working towards accreditation as an 'Apple distinguished educator'.

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- The school **has invested significantly** in providing a detailed programme of **professional development**. The team of newly qualified teachers is provided with coaching and benefits from access to trust-wide subject networks.
- **Parents are highly supportive** of the school and recognise the significant impact of the changes to leadership and the school environment on their children’s progress. They attend a range of celebration events, including assemblies and coffee mornings.
- Pupils benefit from the **opportunity to represent their class** through the ‘pupil parliament’. Young officers for the environment, litter picking, attendance and health and safety work collaboratively with their peers to generate ideas for improvement.

## Quality of provision and outcomes

- In recent years, the proportion of pupils who achieved a good level of development in the early years foundation stage has been above the national average. Baseline information is used by leaders to identify gaps in pupils’ knowledge and plan activities to address their needs. The **enabling environment is calm and focussed and continuous provision is well-organised and equipped**.

“Opportunities for pupils to make connections across the curriculum are plentiful.”

- For the past two years pupils’ outcomes in phonics have been **above the national average** although fewer boys passed the check than girls. Teachers use a range of strategies including speed sounds, ‘tick and fix’ and ‘Fred fingers’. Opportunities for pupils to engage in call and repeat ensure that they build confidence in segmenting and blending sounds.
- The rate of overall absence of pupils at the school is in the **lowest 20%** of schools with a similar level of deprivation. Leaders work closely with families to promote positive messages about the link between attendance and achievement.
- **Relationships between adults and children are highly positive**. As a result, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and a willingness to participate in group activities including singing. Support staff work closely with teachers to identify and address misconceptions.
- Pupils benefit from a **vibrant and attractive learning environment**. In Year 6 reading lessons, the environment acts as the invisible teacher. Classrooms are consistently well organised and include highly effective working walls and topic displays.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers draw on pupils’ prior knowledge to **scaffold new learning**. In a reading lesson, Year 4 pupils drew on their experience of visiting an interactive exhibition on the Vikings to respond to the content of a particular text. In science, pupils used their understanding of cells to explore electricity.
- Teaching of mathematics includes **high quality modelling** and the use of subject-specific language. Pupils use manipulatives to support their learning and make reference to the working wall to recall and consolidate understanding.
- Pupils benefit from access to a range of genres and texts. The reading domains are systematically introduced. Reading skills are developed through strategies, such as ‘zoom in’, which provide a clear focus on vocabulary.
- **Opportunities for pupils to make connections across the curriculum are plentiful**. Year 6 pupils were immersed in Shackleton’s expedition to the polar region through a high-quality non-fiction text. This enabled them to learn about the geography of the region and resilience of team members.

- Curriculum implementation of Islamic Studies is **highly active**. The story of revelation was told through staging the journey towards the cave and enabling discussion of the features and sounds of the landscape. Younger pupils made links between religions and demonstrated their learning using artistic techniques.
- Teaching of physical education is **well-structured** and intended to **motivate and inspire** pupils to participate in physical activity. A series of activity stations provide interest and variety.
- Leaders are **determined** that pupils will be provided with a range of opportunities to talk about learning.

“Relationships between adults and children are highly positive. As a result, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.”



During the visit, we were also successful in being accredited an area of excellence for our **QIS provision**.

The review team said:

**Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?**

Leaders are rightly proud of the strength of the school’s Islamic ethos. The school is committed to ensuring that pupils are well prepared to explore their identities as modern Muslims. The strong relationships between staff and pupils make Islamic messages universal and universal messages Islamic. The holistic curriculum seeks to nurture the mind, body and soul. Mindful of their statutory responsibilities, leaders ensure that pupils learn about a range of faiths and explore fundamental British values. The spiritual element of Islam is nurtured through exceptionally strong teaching of Qur’anic Studies. The school is determined that pupils will understand the importance of tolerance and gain a clear understanding of the root causes of extremism.

Through discrete teaching of Islamic Studies by expert practitioners, pupils are taught the Islamic practices they are required to learn and know in adulthood and which cover the five pillars of the faith. Curriculum design is research-informed and well sequenced. The key declarative knowledge is clearly highlighted. Through consistent implementation of the spiritual garden in every classroom and vibrant wall displays, pupils are reminded that ‘prayer is everywhere’. The recently refurbished prayer hall provides a space for private reflection and communal prayer. An annual Islamic book fair also ensures that parents can access high quality specialist texts. Leaders represent the school at the trust faith forum and benefit from an extensive network of expertise. Strong relationships with parents and community ensure that communication is highly effective. The challenges presented by implementation of new statutory requirements for relationships and sex education have been addressed courageously and with sensitivity. Significant events such as International Women’s Day are celebrated alongside Ramadan and Eid.

**What evidence is there of the impact on pupils’ outcomes?**

The school uses assessment descriptors to assess pupils’ progress in terms of age-related expectations. Current performance information suggests that pupils make rapid progress as a result of high-quality teaching. Pupils’ voice demonstrates that pupils appreciate the high-quality provision.

The school has developed a unique training offer intended to benefit schools in a range of contexts, including those with other kinds of religious distinctiveness. Partnerships with schools in Morocco, Malaysia and Malawi ensure that best practice is developed and shared. Leaders recognise the importance of maintaining a dynamic curriculum that is responsive to the changing landscape of British education and society. The commitment to being at the forefront of thinking, practice and provision in Islamic and Qu’ranic Studies ensures that the school is fully outward looking.

This is a significant moment for our school and a massive acknowledgement of all the developments that we've put in place since July. The lead reviewer described the change as 'astonishing'. Our children deserve the very best and it has always been my commitment to you that this is what we will achieve. This is a really important step in our school becoming the centre of excellence that I shared with you when I became Headteacher.

We still have more work to do, and we'll always be striving to make things better but it's important that we take time to pause and reflect on this.

I want to say a very special thank you to all of the Zayteam – I'm proud to lead a staff team that is creative, united, ambitious and committed to being the very best for the children and community that we serve. We've already started our planning for 2020/21 and things are looking fantastic!

I want to say thank you to all parents and carers – I'm proud of the connections that we have between home and school. The support that you've given to us is so very much appreciated and with our shared ambition to love, care for and educate our children, I know that we'll continue to do great things.

Most of all, I want to say thank you to our children who are just the best – their creativity, kindness, energy and commitment to their learning makes our school a joyful, purposeful and exciting place to be. They are at the centre of all that we do and it's a privilege to work alongside each and every one of them.

Watch this space for all the wonderful plans that will be coming up next as we move into stage 2.

Your very proud Headteacher,

Ms Turner

A. Turner

يرجى الاتصال بالمدرسة إذا كنت ترغب بترجمة هذه الرسالة إلى اللغة العربية  
تکایه په یوه ندي به قوتابخانه وه بکه نه گه ر پيوستت به وه رگيران هه به بو زماني کوردي.  
اگر آپ کو اردو ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم اسکول سے رابطہ کریں