

Promised Land Academy

St. Cedds Hall, Foster Road, Plaistow, London, E13 8SR

Inspection dates	5–7 February 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Pupils have excellent independent learning skills. Their concentration and diligence are exemplary and they make good progress in their subjects.
- Supervision is good for the very large majority of pupils. They are rigorously tested and staff ensure that the unique curriculum is covered well.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils behave in a safe manner and their social skills are good. Relationships are warm and kindly.
- Spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate total commitment to the special mission of their school. They show high levels of respect for the views of others.
- The Principal, trustees and staff are highly committed to the success of each individual pupil. Leaders ensure that supervision is effective and the school is improving. Staff provide a safe place where pupils achieve academically and are well cared for.

It is not yet outstanding because

- A few of the youngest pupils make only adequate progress because supervision is not as effective as it should be. Pupils have insufficient opportunities for creative activities and imaginative play.
- Parents receive insufficient information on the objectives of the afternoon curriculum. They are not given enough details on the progress their children make in these subjects.
- There is limited formal review by leaders of the school's effectiveness and this leads to inconsistencies in the quality of some provision. Planning for the continuous training of staff is not robust enough and pupils' cultural development requires improvement.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a half-day's notice.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence, including the school's website, the assessments of pupils' progress, the reports to parents and carers, the work pupils were doing in their books and the school's policies.
- The inspector observed the 'Opening Exercise', the morning supervision and the afternoon activities. She listened to pupils as they were reading and spoke to them about their work.
- The inspector observed all the supervisors, monitors and volunteers. She met several parents at the start of the school day. Three parents responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Marianick Ellender-Gelé, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Promised Land Academy is an independent co-educational Christian school located in the London Borough of Newham. It opened in 2005 and is registered for pupils aged from four to 16 years.
- There are currently 21 pupils on roll, aged from four years 10 months to 16 years. None has a statement of special educational needs and none has been identified as disabled or as having special educational needs.
- Pupils have a diverse cultural heritage and all have English as their first language.
- The school is part of the Christian Education Europe (CEE) network. It uses the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum, supplemented by other subjects taught in the afternoon. It is a requirement of entry that the families of the pupils are Christians and a high level of involvement is expected from parents.
- The school seeks to 'glorify God by preparing students for a useful and productive Christ-like life by providing a Bible-based education with a staff who are committed Christians'.
- The school was last inspected in November 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision for the youngest pupils so that they make even better progress in their creative skills.
- Provide more detailed information for parents and carers about the subjects studied in the afternoon curriculum and ensure that the progress that pupils make in these subjects is reported more fully.
- Improve the effectiveness of self-evaluation and use the findings to:
 - improve the training of all staff
 - enrich pupils' cultural experiences
 - inform a more robust approach to planning for the future development of the school.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

The unique style of learning and the individual supervision of each pupil lead to good achievement. The rate of progress increases as pupils get older because they become increasingly used to the private-study approach of the ACE philosophy. The youngest pupils take some time to get used to the self-learning process. They make satisfactory progress and their achievement matches that expected for their age in numeracy, reading, handwriting and spelling. Older pupils make good progress because they have excellent independent study skills. The very large majority of pupils achieve the required standards in the Packages of Accelerated Christian Education (PACES). The rigorous structure of the ACE curriculum enables pupils to make good progress in the academic subjects. The supervisors ensure that pupils have a solid knowledge base by insisting that they master at least 80% of the PACES tests before being allowed to move on to the next step. From the outcomes seen, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their information and communication technology (ICT), scientific and language skills. The school has not been open long enough to demonstrate sustained success in formal accreditation. However, pupils are well prepared for the International Christian Certificate of Education and several have achieved certificates in a range of areas such as scripture memorisation and ICT skills.

Across the school, pupils speak with confidence and read with visible pleasure. The youngest pupils were observed to be very engaged in a story about a baboon and forest animals. They strived to decipher new words and they read aloud to the inspector with expression. Older students enjoy researching topics for challenging projects, such as investigations in science and extended research on how to become a missionary. Pupils are prepared well for further studies. They are keen learners, communicate confidently and take great pride in their written work.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. All pupils get along very well together. They are sociable, highly considerate and very welcoming to visitors. Pupils know the school rules and stick to them because they understand their importance. They explained that incidents are very rare and they know what to do if someone upsets them. The school's written records confirm this and show that issues are rare and are followed up appropriately. Pupils confirmed that they feel very safe at the school. There is no bullying and pupils are well informed about how to keep safe, including when using the internet. The way older children look after their younger brothers and sisters is exemplary. Pupils are confident and their self-esteem is high. They are very proud of their school. No time is wasted, because pupils are enthusiastic, self-disciplined and studious learners. They work with concentration and perseverance. When they join group activities, usually over breaks or in the afternoon, pupils do this very maturely and are respectful of others' preferences and opinions. The behaviour of the pupils who use the local gym club for their weekly physical education session is outstanding.

Attendance is excellent and pupils arrive at school on time. The school responds quickly to absence and it expects an explanation from parents and carers.

The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. It is good for moral and social development. The spiritual focus of the daily life in school shines through the relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are very reflective and thoughtful individuals who enjoy spiritual moments together. The daily 'Opening Exercise' provides a good opportunity for pupils to discuss moral concepts. They show a deep personal understanding of moral behaviour, for example when discussing what 'dependable' means for them. Pupils show much devotion and speak with soft expressive voices during prayer. Cultural development is adequate. Pupils are aware that there is wide diversity in ethnicity among their friends and in the local community. They respect differences

readily, including those of friends who attend local mainstream schools. However, there is scope to develop this further to ensure that all pupils acquire an appreciation of a broader range of cultural traditions to better prepare them for life in a multicultural society.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good. The distinctive features of the school means that teachers are called supervisors and there is no direct teaching as such. The quality of supervision is good. Pupils follow a self-learning approach and this works well for the very large majority of them. Supervision is adequate for the youngest pupils. It is not yet good because the planning of activities is not rigorous enough, leading to some lack of focus in learning and some missed opportunities for creative play. This is particularly the case when the pupils work as a whole group, for example during the physical activity session in the afternoon.

Pupils are proud of their work station, called their 'office', where they diligently plan their work for the day and, through regular tests, they gain a good understanding of what they have to do next to improve. Tests when pupils start at the school inform staff of pupils' prior knowledge, and supervisors are always on hand to provide advice and respond to pupils' questions. The supervisors are experienced. They have high expectations and their interventions match pupils' needs. They have access to training and learning materials through the Christian Education Europe organisation. Several monitors and volunteers work at the school and are highly committed. They have had access to some training; however, the quality of their work is not checked sufficiently well and they require additional support to improve their effectiveness and confidence.

Parents and carers are closely involved in their children's learning through continuous dialogue with the Principal and supervisors. Homework includes practical work that builds well on pupils' theoretical knowledge. While parents and carers are formally informed of their children's progress in the ACE curriculum through termly meetings, Parent Fellowships and annual reports, they receive less written feedback about their children's progress in other subjects.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good. The school offers a good range of subjects. The ACE curriculum in the morning is supplemented by other subjects taught in the afternoon. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their academic knowledge in mathematics, science, social studies, word building, English language, literature and Bible studies. This is particularly effective for older pupils who know how to find things out for themselves and extend the curriculum through private research and projects using additional resources, such as the internet and other reference materials. The afternoon sessions develop technological, musical and physical skills but the learning objectives for these sessions are less well defined. The 'ABC' programme provides the youngest pupils with a solid foundation for the academic ACE curriculum, although opportunities for them to develop creative skills require improvement.

The step-by-step approach, through the PACES, ensures that the curriculum is tailored to pupils' specific needs and each pupil moves to the next stage of learning when ready. An enrichment programme includes visits to places of interests, such as the Changing of the Guard, the Houses of Parliament and museums. Visiting experts contribute to pupils' learning experiences. However, the school does not monitor the effectiveness of these events. The extent to which they consolidate and enrich pupils' cultural development is limited.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The school provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The anti-bullying policy is

comprehensive and states clearly that any form of bullying or harassment will not be tolerated. Pupils are encouraged and given guidelines to eat well. Their lunch boxes appear to be very healthy and activities during lunchtime and in the physical education lessons develop students' good attitudes towards fresh air and daily exercise. Pupils say that they feel safe and they told the inspector that they can confidently turn to their friends or an adult for help if they need to. The local safeguarding children's board offers useful advice and the proprietor ensures that staff have up-to-date training so that pupils are appropriately protected. Recruitment procedures comply with the latest guidance and the single central register shows that all the required checks are carried out on adults who have regular contact with children. The Principal is the designated person for child protection and she regularly updates her training. Suitable risk assessments are completed for the school's premises and for visits out of school. The proprietor and trustees have ensured that the independent school standards are met.

Leadership and management

Good

Leadership and management are good. The school has successfully moved its effectiveness from satisfactory to good since its last inspection. This has been achieved through the Principal's and trustees' commitment to promoting the well-being of pupils and improving the quality of the education provided. Most strengths and weaknesses of the school are known and senior leaders discuss these regularly. However, there is no formal self-evaluation of the school's work. As a result, observation of the quality of supervision followed by constructive feedback on aspects to improve to all staff is insufficiently precise. The staff and volunteers are committed Christians who are proud to work at Promised Land Academy. They want to improve and are willing to take new ideas on board. However, the senior leaders' informal self-review does not identify clear training opportunities for staff and this limits the potential to secure further improvement at the school. The premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn effectively, safely and securely. The school's procedures for handling complaints are clear.

Forging good partnerships with parents and carers is high on the school's agenda. The school draws upon the expertise of the families' own knowledge of the beliefs and mission of the ACE programme. Parents and carers are listened to and any concerns are acted upon. The school is currently updating its website to improve further the information it gives to current parents and potential parents and carers. The staff and parents who spoke to the inspector have high ambition for all pupils academically and in their personal development. This is paying dividends and pupils achieve more highly now than at the time of the previous inspection, with strong promotion of equality of opportunity and a determined approach to ensure that the Bible-based education prepares pupils well for a productive Christian life.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	131031
Inspection number	408717
DfE registration number	316/6068

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended 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	Coeducational Christian school
School status	Independent Day School
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Shirley Coote
Chair	Shirley Coote
Principal	Shirley Coote
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,200 (average)
Telephone number	020 7473 3229
Email address	admin@promisedlandacademy.org.uk

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