

Inspection of The Olive School, Hackney

32 St Johns Church Road, Hackney, London E9 6EJ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 May 2025

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Babar Mirza. This school is part of Star Academies, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sir Mufti Hamid Patel CBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kamruddin Kothia OBE DL.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since May 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils delight in being part of the Olive School, Hackney community. They are exceptionally proud ambassadors for their school. Pupils are safe here and show a deep level of respect to their fellow pupils. From Reception, pupils learn to care for and help others. For example, they prepare gifts and hampers to deliver to their neighbours and local food banks. 'Reading ambassadors' support their younger peers to read.

The school is exceptionally ambitious for all aspects of pupils' education. Pupils understand and meet these high expectations. They are fully focused in lessons and waste no learning time. Pupils are eager to complete the ambitious work planned for them. They achieve highly, including in national assessments. Pupils produce high-quality work and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

An extensive range of enrichment opportunities broaden pupils' horizons. For example, pupils visit universities and enjoy hearing from those who work in medicine, robotics and finance. All pupils take part in extra-curricular activities, including debating, poetry competitions and a highly successful choir. Pupils in the early years take part in ballet to build their strength. Well-planned visits enrich pupils' learning. For example, Year 4 visit Kew Gardens to enhance their learning about plants.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum in all areas is highly ambitious and often exceeds what is expected nationally. The precise identification of what pupils need to know and remember ensures that nothing is left to chance. From the early years onwards, learning is well sequenced to build on what has come before. In science, for example, children in the early years explore different animals. By Year 6, pupils have built an increasingly deep understanding of a range of animals, including the functions of different human organs.

Subject leads take part in regular 'masterclasses' and share this high-quality training with their teams. As a result, teachers are absolute experts in the classroom. They present information clearly, check pupils' understanding and routinely address any misconceptions that arise. They design activities to review and consolidate pupils' learning. For example, pupils have multiple opportunities to discuss their ideas with a peer. Over time, pupils build a deep and detailed body of knowledge within each subject.

The school prioritises pupils' reading. Staff are exceptionally well trained to deliver the phonics programme. As a result, they model sounds consistently and precisely. Pupils are given regular opportunities to practise the sounds they know. Books are well matched to these sounds. Teachers carefully identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils quickly learn to read with increasing accuracy and fluency. There is a sharp focus on ensuring any necessary support is put in place. 'Reading cafes' encourage parents and carers to see their child's flourishing reading. From the early years onwards, the school supports pupils to build a sophisticated and purposeful vocabulary.

The school is highly responsive to the needs of all pupils. This helps the school to identify swiftly any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Regular training takes place for staff. This helps to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are carefully considered in each subject. The school includes these pupils in all aspects of school life. The school's ambition for pupils with SEND ensures they are well prepared for their transition to future education.

The school has clear and fair expectations for pupils' behaviour. From the early years, pupils understand and apply these. As a result, they behave in an impeccable manner at all times, including when moving around the school site. During breaktimes, pupils play harmoniously together. 'Playground buddies' in each year group ensure everybody is included. The school has similarly high expectations for pupils' attendance. High attendance is a real strength of the school. This is because the school works with pupils and their families to overcome any barriers to regular attendance.

The school has carefully designed the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum to fully meet the needs of its pupils. For example, external visitors share messages with pupils about how to stay safe in the local area. Pupils learn key topics such as online safety and the importance of the British values.

Staff at all levels enjoy working here. In particular, they appreciate the possibilities for career progression. Staff know that the school has taken multiple steps to reduce workload and enhance their well-being. The trust and those responsible for governance know the school well. They match the exceptionally high expectations that the school has for all pupils. As a result, they have a sharp focus on ensuring all pupils meet and exceed their full potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and

pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139814
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10379149
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	626
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kamruddin Kothia OBE DL
CEO of the trust	Sir Mufti Hamid Patel CBE
Principal	Babar Mirza
Website	www.olivehackney.com
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 May 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current principal took up post in August 2020.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The last section 48 inspection by the Association of Muslim Schools took place in April 2017.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the principal and other senior leaders. The inspectors met with members of the trustees, governing body and a representative from Star Academies.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, science, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The curriculum in other subjects was considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff through both discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Hannah Glossop, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bob Hamlyn	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Walters	His Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector

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