

## School inspection report

25 to 27 November 2025

# Azbuka Russian-English Bilingual School

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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 promote the school's aims by fostering an inclusive and respectful environment for bilingual, multilingual and multicultural pupils to develop socially as well as academically. Staff know pupils well and provide individual care and support so that pupils' wellbeing is promoted. Pupils and staff interact positively and cohesively as a school community.
2. Governors offer appropriate challenge and support so that the Standards are met consistently. Leaders, including in the early years, demonstrate that they have the required knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Leaders work closely with other bilingual schools, relevant external authorities and experts, as well as parents, to offer appropriate support for pupils.
3. The curriculum is delivered in English and Russian, which enables pupils to develop knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. Pupils develop their understanding in purposeful ways due to the links made between different subjects.
4. Teachers use their subject knowledge to plan lessons well. They use a suitable range of resources so that lessons are engaging and pupils are motivated to learn. Lessons are matched to pupils' prior attainment and language skills so that they make good progress.
5. Staff provide effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) or who are new to Russian, so that they make good progress.
6. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively to make good progress. Staff provide suitable support, matched to their needs, in partnership with parents and relevant external specialists.
7. The physical education (PE) programme is varied. The school makes effective use of indoor space as well as a nearby park to provide daily physical activity. However, weekly PE lessons for primary-aged pupils, and gross motor skills activities in the early years, are not always matched to pupils' age and stage, which means that they do not make as much progress as they could.
8. Leaders have recently redeveloped the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum and have shared this with parents. Pupils are taught about respect for all as well as how to keep themselves safe, including online, in PSHE lessons and in assemblies. PSHE is integrated into topics taught across the curriculum to make learning more relevant.
9. Health and safety protocols are robust and are monitored regularly. Leaders identify risks thoroughly and take effective steps to mitigate them, including by responding to recommendations in external audits. Record-keeping is accurate and staff receive up-to-date training in fire safety and paediatric first aid.
10. Leaders engage with parents to provide pupils with an understanding of a variety of cultural traditions and careers. They organise workshops through external organisations to enhance pupils' understanding of their rights as a child. Regular trips to local theatres, museums, religious sites and outdoor spaces enrich pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain.

11. Safeguarding procedures in the school are effective. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities ensure that all staff undertake required training. Pupils and staff are confident in knowing how to report concerns.

## 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:

- ensure that physical development activities for children in the early years, and PE lessons for pupils in the primary school, are well matched their age and stage.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders create an inclusive and caring environment for pupils who are bilingual, multilingual and multicultural. Staff successfully model and encourage positive interactions in English and Russian. This enables pupils to develop academically and socially, in line with the school's aims and ethos. Staff and pupils demonstrate care for each other and work together as a community.
13. Leaders and governors promote pupils' wellbeing by providing an environment for pupils to be confident about their language, culture and identity. Leaders think carefully about the bilingual education the school provides and review the curriculum to ensure that it is balanced. Leaders engage in partnerships with other bilingual schools for mutual support and advice.
14. Governors have a range of skills and expertise, including about bilingual education and health and safety. This enables them to provide effective oversight of school policies and their implementation. They offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders, ensuring that leaders have the required skills and training to meet the Standards consistently. Governors read reports and policies, visit the school and raise pertinent questions to improve provision and procedures.
15. Leaders and governors carry out audits to ensure that the Standards are met. They evaluate different aspects of provision and plan ways to improve the school. For instance, leaders have recently reviewed the PSHE policy and curriculum to make it more purposeful, by integrating it across other subjects. Policies are kept up to date and are in line with statutory guidance. They are implemented consistently and are understood by pupils and staff. Leaders ensure that staff are aware of updates to the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework, so that children receive appropriate care.
16. Risk assessments for the use of school premises and trips are thorough, reviewed consistently and adjusted as needed to mitigate potential harm. Leaders are aware of situational and contextual risks to pupils and take appropriate steps to mitigate them. For instance, they review and improve security procedures related to the building and for daily trips to the park for breaktime and PE.
17. Leaders engage effectively with relevant outside agencies, including the local authority and the police, to seek advice. They follow recommendations made by speech and language therapists and educational psychologists to support pupils' development. The school informs the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.
18. Required information is made available to parents and prospective parents, including via the school's website. Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress with their teachers through termly, face-to-face visits. Leaders provide annual reports and termly parents' meetings so that parents gain an understanding of their child's progress. Reports are detailed and contain clear next steps in each subject.
19. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is shared with parents. Complaints are recorded with sufficient detail of actions taken and logs are reviewed to spot patterns. Governors have effective oversight of the complaints policy and its implementation.
20. Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils who have SEND. The school has created accessibility plans which are appropriate for the setting and facilities.

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

**21. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders implement a curriculum that promotes effective bilingual learning. It combines features of the English national curriculum and the Russian curriculum, to teach pupils English and Russian language and literature respectively. Leaders review schemes of work to ensure that pupils build on their knowledge and skills sequentially and are prepared to move on to secondary schools in England or international schools. Pupils are taught most subjects in both languages to improve their language proficiency. Effective cross-curricular links enable pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding meaningfully.
23. Across the school, pupils' linguistic skills are developed through effective bilingual support from adults and carefully selected resources. Teachers select engaging texts and use phonics charts and sentence prompts to help pupils improve their vocabulary and their accuracy in grammar and punctuation. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills by enabling them to express themselves, in both languages, throughout the school day. Pupils use what they have learned in language and literature lessons to write in a range of genres across other subjects.
24. Teachers develop pupils' mathematical skills by providing opportunities for pupils to apply what they know to solve problems. Pupils explain their reasoning, which helps them to spot errors and self-correct their work. Pupils learn history, geography and science through a range of topics in 'the world around us' lessons. Older pupils develop knowledge of technical vocabulary and understanding of the scientific method with weekly practical lessons. Pupils learn technological skills such as cooking and sewing in design and technology lessons linked to their topics. Older pupils become adept at coding games based on sequencing through lessons in information and communication technology (ICT). Children in the early years develop technological skills by, for example, using mechanical and battery-operated toys and by working with simple tools, such as knives, to cut fruit.
25. Pupils develop their creative and aesthetic skills by studying the work of different artists and then using a range of media to produce their own artwork. They listen to a wide variety of music genres which helps them to appreciate music and sing in performances. Pupils across the school are taught classical, traditional and contemporary styles of dancing, in weekly dance lessons, with increasing levels of challenge.
26. Teachers plan lessons well, matching learning to pupils' prior attainment. As a result, pupils are motivated, eager to learn and strive to perform at their best. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils so that they feel free to ask questions and contribute ideas in class discussions. Pupils seek help, when required, from readily available resources and displays, their peers or staff. This enables them to make good progress.
27. Teachers make skilful use of resources, including dual-language prompts and displays. They adapt learning objectives in English and Russian to build on individual pupils' language proficiency, with additional lessons provided after school where necessary. As a result, pupils who speak EAL and those who are new to Russian make good progress.
28. Staff quickly identify pupils' academic and pastoral needs. They develop and implement detailed individual learning plans for pupils who have SEND. They provide appropriate levels of support and

resources matched to pupils' individual needs. Leaders ensure that teachers and parents are well supported with appropriate strategies, including those provided by external specialists, so that pupils make good progress.

29. The school has well-established assessment systems to evaluate pupils' work regularly and systematically. Teachers provide individual feedback to enable pupils to easily recognise what they do well and what they need to do to improve. Older pupils create clear success criteria before a task so that they can assess their own work. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. They attain well in entrance examinations and gain places at a range of secondary schools.
30. In the early years, children's communication and language needs are met through interactions with staff who speak English, Russian or are bilingual. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of phonics in both languages through carefully planned activities and the use of good quality resources. Children acquire new vocabulary by listening to stories and singing songs in both languages. Staff enable children to share their interests and develop the curriculum accordingly. Children enjoy learning and make good progress towards the early learning goals.
31. After-school clubs enable pupils to employ strategies taught in chess. They make useful, sustainable products in arts and crafts and sewing clubs, and develop their investigative skills in science club. Pupils also have the choice of learning instruments, such as the violin or piano, to develop their musical skills and talent.

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

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

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

33. Leaders create a supportive environment for pupils to develop their self-confidence, self-knowledge and self-esteem. Leaders and staff successfully promote a culture of mutual respect in the school by modelling appropriate behaviour. Pupils are kind and courteous and understand their role as part of the school community.
34. The PSHE curriculum has clear objectives. It is taught in specific PSHE lessons as well as being integrated across the curriculum. Pupils are taught to identify and manage their emotions through discussions in PSHE lessons, reinforced by age-appropriate charts in each classroom. They choose ways to help regulate their emotions, such as using breathing techniques, relaxing in the calm corner or listening to music.
35. In relationships education, pupils are taught about how to build positive friendships through role play, both in English and Russian. They understand how hurtful behaviour can have an impact on people's feelings. Pupils are taught about consent in age-appropriate ways. Lessons are supplemented by workshops run by a national charity, where suitable resources and discussions help pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
36. Pupils behave well in lessons, in the dining hall and when walking to the nearby park. Systems to manage behaviour are implemented effectively and are understood by staff and pupils.
37. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy. Pupils are taught how to identify bullying and what to do if it should occur. Bullying happens rarely. Staff deal effectively with any issues that are raised.
38. Leaders develop pupils' spiritual knowledge and understanding by, for example, providing opportunities to spend time in nature, looking after plants and understanding their benefits. Pupils listen to different genres of music and can say how it makes them feel, often choosing to listen to music while they work.
39. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to be physically active, including weekly dance lessons. Older pupils attend swimming lessons and younger pupils learn circus skills, taught by external providers. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 take part in mixed-age PE lessons once a week where they learn ball skills and gymnastics and take part in team games. However, the progression of skills in PE lessons is not always closely matched to pupils' age and stage of development. In the early years, children's physical activities are developed through daily walks to the local park, where they play games. Opportunities to develop and increase their gross motor skills are not developed as effectively as they could be. As a result, primary-aged pupils and children in the early years make less progress in PE and physical development than they could.
40. In the early years, staff promote children's social, emotional and personal development effectively. Children are confident in their environment and engage happily with other children and staff in their activities. They understand classroom rules and follow school routines well. Children learn how to regulate their feelings by engaging in breathing exercises in yoga sessions. This helps them regain focus and get ready to listen in group activities.

41. Health and safety procedures are effective. On-site checks and fire safety procedures are undertaken regularly and logged efficiently. The school engages outside agencies to audit specific areas, such as fire safety, and adheres to recommendations to review policy and practice.
42. Staff meet statutory requirements to have suitable paediatric first aid training. Appropriate first aid facilities are available, including a medical room area, with dedicated first aid kits provided for on-site and off-site use.
43. Pupils and parents understand the importance of the arrival and dismissal process. They participate in a safe and appropriate manner, due to effective systems and supervision. Ratios of staff escorting pupils to and from the park are appropriate. Teachers ensure that pupils are supervised throughout the school day, including during indoor recreational time.
44. Leaders maintain attendance and admission registers in line with current statutory requirements. They monitor attendance and promote regular attendance with pupils and parents. Leaders take appropriate action in response to absence, where necessary.

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

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

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

46. In lessons and assemblies, leaders promote British values such as democracy, individual liberty and respect for people from different cultures and with disabilities. Pupils understand the importance of democracy and exercise their democratic rights when voting on activities. Role-play activities enable pupils to develop empathy and understanding of how discrimination based on physical appearance or other characteristics might feel. In 'the world around us' lessons, pupils learn about the cultures and customs of people from a range of countries including Wales, Japan and Kenya.
47. Pupils develop their cultural understanding of different types of religions through visits to places of worship, including churches, mosques, temples and synagogues, where they listen to talks. They discuss common values between people who practise religion as well as those who do not.
48. Children in the early years are taught how to develop their social skills by taking turns, sharing resources and following class rules. In the early years, leaders arrange a wide range of visits and trips, such as daily walks to the park, visiting the local garden centre or watching a theatre show. Children display increasing levels of independence while getting prepared to go outside, putting on hats, coats, boots and gloves, preparing them for daily living.
49. In the primary school, pupils use role-play scenarios to explore how to make moral choices and not give in to peer pressure. These sessions promote their self-confidence as they learn how to express their opinions.
50. Leaders plan opportunities for pupils to visit local museums and activity centres to deepen their knowledge of topics covered. Pupils across the school visit local theatres to watch films and plays which relate to their topics. Pupils watch age-appropriate news programmes to build awareness of current events.
51. Pupils across the school are taught food preparation and hygiene to help them develop skills for life. Pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 take part in a residential course on the Isle of Wight where they participate in activities to help them develop resilience and independence.
52. Children in the early years develop their economic understanding by role-playing shops, exchanging goods for money. Older pupils are taught about the monetary system in Britain within PSHE lessons, where they learn about topics such as budgeting. They use this knowledge to manage a budget when buying items in a shop or meals in a restaurant on school trips.
53. Pupils understand their role within a community and shared space. Pupils relish responsibility, such as being on the school council or acting as a lunchtime monitor. They enjoy undertaking tasks in lessons, such as getting resources ready or tidying books, often without being asked, which develops their independence and responsibility.
54. Pupils raise money for local and national charities. They sing carols to people in a nearby home for the elderly. Older pupils learn about how families may need to plan nutritious meals on a limited budget before bringing in food to supply the local foodbank. This develops their understanding of ways they can contribute to society.

55. In the early years, children learn about people who help us. Older pupils listen to talks and engage in workshops provided by parents and experts so that they gain an understanding of different types of careers. Older pupils take part in activities that help them think critically about the importance of different careers.

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

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

## Safeguarding

57. The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Governors have appropriate safeguarding training and provide oversight through regular reviews of the safeguarding policy and procedures. They arrange for external safeguarding audits and take action to improve rigour in safeguarding processes, where necessary.
58. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities have suitable training, which includes the 'Prevent' duty. They ensure that they are up to date with statutory guidance by accessing information, such as from relevant local authorities. Safeguarding logs are maintained securely. Leaders record their actions with sufficient detail. Leaders seek advice from children's services and the police, as appropriate, and make referrals when required. This enables them to access effective support for pupils according to their needs.
59. Staff receive a thorough induction about safeguarding procedures when they join the school, as well as regular ongoing training and updates. Weekly staff meetings include safeguarding information so that staff are aware of how to be vigilant and how to report concerns about pupils. Staff know when and how to report a concern about another member of staff, including to the relevant local authority if required.
60. Pupils know who they can go to with any concerns, including a leader for wellbeing. Pupils can report their concerns anonymously through a 'worry box'. They know how to contact appropriate agencies through posters displayed around the school.
61. An effective internet filtering and monitoring system is in place. Leaders review contracts with external providers and test the system regularly. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in public spaces and when using school equipment. They are taught how to stay safe online during PSHE and ICT lessons. Older pupils discuss different scenarios which enables them to identify possible scams when online and when to seek help from an adult.
62. Safer recruitment measures are robust. Thorough pre-employment checks are carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. These procedures are overseen by governors. The single central record of pre-appointment checks is maintained systematically and kept securely.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Azbuka Russian-English Bilingual School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	205/6007
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1153976
<b>Address</b>	Studland Street Studland Hall Hammersmith London W6 0JS
<b>Phone number</b>	020 8392 2286
<b>Email address</b>	office@azbukafoundation.org
<b>Website</b>	www.azbukafoundation.org
<b>Proprietor</b>	Azbuka Foundation
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Maria Gavrilova
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Maria Gavrilova
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	41
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 November to 1 December 2022

## Information about the school

64. Azbuka Russian-English Bilingual School is an independent, co-educational day school situated in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The school first opened as a Nursery in 2002 and then as a primary school in 2015. The Azbuka Foundation is a registered charity and is governed by a board of trustees.
65. There are 15 children in the early years, all of whom are currently in the Nursery.
66. The school has identified a small number of pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are no pupils in the school who have an education, health and care plan.
67. The school has identified 17 pupils as speaking English as an additional language.
68. The school states its aims are to prepare children for life and work in the modern world where multilingual and multicultural communicative competence and social skills are as valid as individual academic achievements and to meet the educational, academic, cultural, linguistic and social needs of Russian multilingual and multicultural children families living in London.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

25 to 27 November 2025

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

70. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers 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.

71. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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