

Al-Khair School

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.^{1, 2}

This was a light touch educational inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection. The school had not informed the Department for Education (DfE) of changes with regard to the increase in numbers and additional accommodation. As a result, the inspection included an assessment of the additional site and increased pupil numbers against the premises and accommodation regulatory requirements.

Information about the school

Al-Khair School is an independent Islamic day school. It is owned by the Al-Khair Foundation. The school is situated on two sites very close to each other. A larger building caters for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who join the school in Reception year. The building also caters for boys and girls in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 and boys in Key Stages 3 and 4. Girls of secondary school age and pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are mainly taught in a separate, smaller building which opened in September 2010. The main school is a converted warehouse and the second site was previously a suite of offices for an accountancy firm. The school is located in Croydon, in south London. It admits boys and girls aged from four to sixteen years. The school is registered for 185 pupils and there are currently 244 full-time pupils, including 27 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. At the time of the inspection, all of the pupils in Year 5 were on an educational visit.

The aims of the school are 'to provide a suitable environment for pupils to receive a broad, balanced curriculum based on the National Curriculum with additional Islamic input designed to cater for their moral, spiritual and physical development'. Almost all the pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school was registered and opened in 2003. This is the school's second Ofsted inspection with a published report; the first was in 2007.

Evaluation of the school

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Al-Khair School continues to provide a satisfactory education while successfully meeting its aims. It meets all but one of the regulatory requirements for independent schools, an improvement from the previous inspection. The curriculum and overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour is good as is their progress. Other positive aspects of the school include good teaching and assessment, good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the school's good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety.

The increased numbers of pupils currently on roll are suitably accommodated and 244 pupils is accepted as the new maximum limit for registration. As a result, the school premises, including the additional site, meet all the regulatory requirements except one. This is an improvement from the last inspection. However, there are not enough toilets available in the building used by the girls and most of the pupils in Key Stage 2. The suggested areas for improvement in the previous report have been suitably addressed. Safeguarding procedures are secure. Regulatory requirements are met with regard to provision of information. Parents and carers receive informative newsletters and detailed and informative termly reports about their children's progress. A majority of those who returned the questionnaires expressed a high level of regard for the school.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school has managed to maintain the strengths identified at the time of the last inspection during a time of significant changes and an increase in the school population. The curriculum is satisfactory overall rather than good, mainly because of the satisfactory provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the limited opportunities elsewhere in the school for pupils to develop their skills to a higher level in creative subjects.

The curriculum is securely based on most of the National Curriculum subjects except for music. Secure policies, plans and schemes of work support detailed lesson plans. Personal, social and health education is taught well throughout the school and certain aspects, for example, drugs and sex education are addressed through other subjects including science. Physical education is regularly taught by school staff. A few of the pupils and parents and carers who returned questionnaires raised some concerns about the lack of outdoor facilities at the school. The school addresses this issue satisfactorily through using local parks and a leisure centre.

The religious ethos of the school is effectively supported through a range of activities including daily opportunities for prayer, the 'Hadith of the week' and Qur'an and Arabic lessons for all age groups. Secondary-aged pupils have good access to a range of GCSE courses including English, mathematics, history and Arabic. Pupils have regular opportunities for careers advice, from Year 9 onwards. A good example of this was the careers fair that the school organised. Pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well planned and taught. For example, there are regular

opportunities for pupils to use key words to support their better understanding of different subjects; an improvement from the last inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their research skills for different subjects by using computers during information and communication technology lessons. There are some regularly planned lessons where pupils have opportunities to experience creative subjects such as drama and art and design. However, pupils' skills and knowledge are rarely extended or challenged sufficiently in these areas to match their capabilities. The school extends the curriculum well through activities such as homework clubs and additional visits which include taking part in events such as Science and Engineering week, The Times Spelling Bee and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Teaching and assessment are good. Most lessons have clear learning objectives and pupils know what they have to do. The best lessons are well planned with opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with each other. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' work mean that there are good opportunities for sustained and concentrated work. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to ask good questions and to challenge pupils about how they can achieve higher grades. Good use of information about pupils' learning is usually used to plan lessons. However, marking is not of a consistent quality. The best marking provides regular feedback in pupils' books with suggestions for improvement, but some, although undertaken regularly, provides only cursory ticks and praise that is not subject related. Pupils' behaviour is good and often outstanding. They demonstrate an eagerness to learn and, given the opportunity, pupils enter into productive discussions and ask questions of their teachers. In the small number of less effective lessons teachers do not provide regular opportunities for pupils to talk about their work. Lessons are heavily teacher directed leaving few opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of independent learning. This slows their progress especially for more able pupils.

Assessment procedures are good. There are whole-school systems from Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 4 that track pupils' progress through formal assessments. These assessment activities provide clear information about how pupils are progressing and inform senior managers and teachers when some pupils may require additional support. In Key Stage 4, there are regular checks of pupils' progress towards their GCSE examination targets with opportunities for additional support and guidance. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils achieve good GCSE results.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as at the time of the last inspection. Clear moral and spiritual guidance is given being well founded on Islamic beliefs which contribute significantly to the positive and courteous relationships in the school. The wide mix of minority ethnic groups in the school leads to good levels of tolerance and harmony between pupils. Pupils demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and very positive attitudes to their school. This is reflected in their regular attendance. The Al-Khair Foundation's influence ensures that pupils

are encouraged from an early age to think about others less fortunate than themselves. For example, the school held a Fairtrade Fortnight very recently. Other examples of this can be seen through the school's fund raising and discussions about world events including the recent Japanese earthquake. Roles and responsibilities in school are taken seriously including prefects and head boy who lead by example. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives through the development of their good basic skills and opportunities to take part in local and national events to practise presentational skills. Pupils learn about public institutions in the United Kingdom through activities which include taking part in the youth parliament elections.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety has remained good. This includes the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have the required checks made prior to appointment which are recorded on the single central register. There are secure safeguarding policies and procedures in place. All the staff are trained to appropriate levels in child protection procedures. The designated safeguarding officer has received the required higher level of training. Incidents of bullying are almost non-existent and there are no exclusions of any type. Pupils have a good awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles. Pupils generally bring healthy snacks and packed lunches. In addition, the school has an arrangement with a local delicatessen to provide nutritious meals for any pupils who express a preference or who have any specific dietary requirements. The school carries out conscientious risk assessments for both on- and off-site activities. The school's development plan meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The satisfactory provision and leadership and management secure satisfactory outcomes for children. The staff have a sound view of the setting's strengths and areas for further development.

Good partnerships with parents and carers ensure a good range of information is shared effectively. Consequently, children enjoy school, behave well and feel safe. The setting promotes children's health with, for example, opportunities for making healthy food. Reliable assessment information to gauge the level of children's knowledge and understanding from when they start in the setting is not available but observations of lessons during the inspection and the work seen indicate children's levels of achievement are at least satisfactory, especially in their reading, writing and personal and social skills.

Staff plan activities to cover the areas of learning but do not always promote enough opportunities for children to choose their activities and so develop greater independence. There are age-appropriate resources in the classrooms. Although direct access to the outdoor learning environment is very limited, the setting

supports children's understanding of being healthy and enhances the outdoor provision with regular visits to a local park and a nearby primary school's playing fields. Teachers evaluate and assess individual children's learning and development to inform the planning of future activities. While the assessments are useful and are used effectively to help children achieve satisfactory outcomes, they do not relate sufficiently closely to the expected goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage and staff do not compile the children's assessment profiles as required.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure there are sufficient washrooms in the premises to meet the needs of Key Stage 2 pupils and girls of secondary school age (paragraph 23 (j)).

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that staff relate their assessments of children's learning and development closely to the early learning goals and use this information to inform the planning of future activities
- ensure that Early Years Foundation Stage profiles are completed as a record of achievement.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Improve the range of opportunities for all pupils to develop a higher level of skills in creative subjects including drama, and art and design.
- Plan to promote more independent learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to develop their creative skills more consistently, especially by making use of outdoor learning opportunities.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

Inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	

School details

School status	Independent
Type of school	Muslim Faith School
Date school opened	2003
Age range of pupils	4–16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 151 Girls: 93 Total: 244
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0 Girls: 0 Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0 Girls: 0 Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	Primary School: £3,750 Secondary School: £4,125
Address of school	109–117 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon, CR0 6BE
Telephone number	020 8662 8664
Email address	admin@alkhair.org.uk
Primary School Headteacher	Mrs Almas Iqbal
Secondary School Headteacher	Mrs Aisha Chaudhry
Proprietor	Qasim Ahmad