

# The Alyssa School

Independent school standard inspection report

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DfE registration number	330/6205
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135688
Inspection number	397617
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2012
Reporting inspector	Mary Hinds

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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.

## **Information about the school**

The Alyssa school is located in Birmingham and was opened in 2005. It provides secondary education for students aged 11 to 19 years. The students have been referred by Pupil Connect a part of Birmingham City Council which secures education for students who are disconnected from school. All students have failed to access mainstream school because they either do not speak English or are at the early stages of speaking English. Some have missed vital years of their education in their home land. Up to 17 different nationalities make up the school community, for example students arrive from Somalia, Poland, Romania, India, Portugal, Iran, Iraq, The Yemen and Pakistan. There are currently 16 students on roll all of whom attend full-time. No students are disabled and none have special educational needs. The school can quadruple in size and there can be as many as 85 on the school roll as a significant number of students are admitted throughout the year. The school strives to ensure that all students develop a determination to succeed in their education, to be confident English speakers, and to be tolerant and harmonious members of society. The school was last inspected in 2009. Since then, the founding member of the school, the proprietor has become the headteacher.

## **Evaluation of the school**

The Alyssa school provides a good education. It successfully meets its aims and meets all of the regulatory requirements for registration as an independent school. As a result of high quality leadership, it has continued to improve rapidly since its last inspection. The good teaching and curriculum ensure that an effective and purposeful education is provided that secures students' good progress, preparing them well for the next stage of their lives. Students now make outstanding progress in their behaviour. Provision for welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding arrangements are also outstanding.

## **Quality of education**

The curriculum is good. It is relevant and meets the needs of all students and is based on a thematic approach, which often starts from the students' own interests and experiences such as 'Where we live and our community.' There is a broad and balanced range of subjects, reflecting the National Curriculum. The school focuses particularly well on developing students' English language and communication skills, through an accredited course 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL). Teachers are skilled at maximising every opportunity to ensure that students are able to practise their language skills, not only in English lessons but also in other subjects

and in other locations. Students respond exceptionally well to the opportunities provided, and this together with the good provision ensures that all make good progress in a range of subjects from their various starting points, particularly in speaking English.

Students study a range of accredited courses in English, mathematics, science, personal, social and health education programme (PSHE), information and communication technology (ICT), languages, including Urdu and Arabic, as well as studying art and physical education (PE). Over the last three years a significant proportion of students achieved at least three national qualifications. In 2012 the percentage of students achieving five or more national qualifications, including literacy based qualifications doubled, resulting in almost all students achieving five or more national qualifications. Furthermore, last year was the first time a minority of students achieved one or more GCSE's. From very low baselines, this represents good progress for all students. Last year 100% of students went on to further education. The curriculum is enhanced through several visits linked to topic work, with opportunities for collaborative team-work and for students to experience leadership roles. As a consequence, such provision contributes well to the students' personal development. Although students are supported with good careers advice and are effectively prepared for their future, they currently do not undertake work experience.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Provision is not yet outstanding because teaching and the curriculum are not yet promoting outstanding outcomes. There are number of key strengths which secure good progress for all groups of learners. All staff have high expectations resulting in confident, cooperative and mature learners. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, particularly in developing English language. They use effective strategies to maximise opportunities for students to practise and develop their linguistic skills, for example, through a wide range of questioning and paired work. In the best lessons teachers provide opportunities for students to assess each other, and use their on-going assessments well to adjust activities in response to the students' level of understanding. For example, in an English lesson, students were encouraged to identify and put into context sentences using the past tense, and to include irregular verbs, in groups and in pairs. Students then assessed each others' progress. The teacher continuously monitored the progress made, effectively modelling students' language and providing timely encouragement to which students enthusiastically responded resulting in effective learning and progress. Learning occasionally slows in mathematics, when students are not always provided with practical equipment to support their learning. As a consequence, mathematical concepts and ideas are not always as secure as they could be. Students receive clear feedback on their work, including their homework, because marking indicates to students how to improve their work. Teachers formally assess students' work on a six weekly basis where targets are evaluated and re-set to secure students' good achievement.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students are exceptionally appreciative of the school's work. They thoroughly enjoy their education, as their high attendance rate illustrates. Staff provide supportive relationships as well as having high expectations for behaviour at all times. Students are exceptionally responsive to the behaviour management approaches used and are able to consider and reflect on their own behaviour and consider the consequences of their actions very effectively. Students' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are outstanding. Lesson observations reveal how supportive and considerate students are to each other. The high degree of trust and respect between students and staff contributes significantly to the students' social and moral development. Staff take every opportunity to raise students' self-esteem and boost their self-confidence particularly by providing students with opportunities to take on responsibilities as school councillors and team leaders, as well as rewarding good behaviour and effort through a house point system. Students state that the school removes barriers to their learning because it provides them with the linguistic skills and confidence to speak English. Students also say that the school inculcates a belief that they can fulfil their potential, as one student said 'I am going to be the first barrister in my family. This school has helped me to have the confidence to do so...' Students from many cultural and ethnic backgrounds work and relax harmoniously together, as one student stated 'It's good to learn about different cultures and places - we learn from each other and we all make friends...' This together with studies of different cultures and faiths prepares students extremely well for life in a multi-cultural society in a way that promotes tolerance.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are outstanding. All of the required policies to ensure the safety and welfare of students are in place and they are implemented very effectively. Staff are highly committed to ensuring that students receive excellent quality care and all students have a personal tutor who they can talk to about any worries that they may have. There is a well established culture of safety, where there is excellent practice to ensure students' safety is consistently implemented in all areas of school life. For example, all safeguarding arrangements are thorough and supported by regular child protection training for all staff, including the designated person for child protection. Students respond very positively to the school's code of conduct and the nurturing environment. The school has an effective partnership with parents and carers, including a weekly family learning session where parents and carers meet together with their children to learn English. Students say that they feel extremely safe and that they are well cared for by staff. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, and state that they have never been bullied or witnessed any forms of bullying. Indeed, the school awards students certificates to recognise those who have shown respect for others, or who have helped a new student to settle into their new school by awarding them the 'Tolerance Hero' once a month, or a 'Caught you caring' award.

All the fire and risk assessments have been carried out and the school is addressing all actions identified for improvement. Records of fire evacuation practices and tests of fire alarms and extinguishers are well maintained. Students are taught about healthy eating through food technology lessons and healthy options are provided at lunch-time.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school carries out all of the required checks on staff and the proprietor, recording these appropriately in a single central register.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The premises are well maintained, secure and are safe. Classrooms are of an adequate size and enable students to learn effectively. There are separate specialist classrooms for ICT and science, as well as a library and a larger room for assemblies and drama. Outdoor space is adequate but limited, therefore, the school makes good use of a nearby school's hall and gymnasium, as well as the local park to supplement provision.

### **Provision of information**

The school's prospectus provides parents, carers and others with all of the required information. Information is clear, accurate and up-to-date. Parents and carers are provided with suitable annual reports about the achievement, effort and attendance made by their children in the main subjects taught.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The complaints procedures meet regulatory requirements.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

### **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- Provide work experience to ensure students are suitable prepared for the world of work.
- Provide mathematical apparatus to support students' learning in mathematics and to promote practical work.

## 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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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Secondary		
<b>Type of school</b>	Independent		
<b>Date school opened</b>	2005		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 14	Girls: 2	Total: 16
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 1	Girls:	Total: 1
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£6,300		
<b>Address of school</b>	Bibi House 69-85 Whitmore Road Small Heath Birmingham B10 0NR		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 773 4332		
<b>Email address</b>	alyssa@aiswm.org.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruby B Khan		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ruby B Khan		



**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



24 September 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of The Alyssa School, Birmingham, B10 0NR**

Thank you for your welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed the visit and the opportunity to talk to you and older students who have now left school and gone on to college. I judge your school to be good and it meets all government requirements. I was particularly pleased to see:

- your exemplary behaviour and the excellent relationship and respect between you and all the staff
- the good teaching, particularly how well you were acquiring English
- the strong and supportive leadership by your headteacher
- your resilience and cooperation which you showed throughout each lesson
- the way that you develop and grow to become sensible and mature members of the community
- that you have set yourself goals to achieve when you leave school
- that your questionnaire shows that you appreciate how good the teaching is and that you enjoy school.

To bring about further improvement, I have asked the headteacher to make sure that you all make good rates of progress in mathematics and have the necessary mathematical apparatus to support practical learning in the subject and that you all have work experience.

You can help to continue to improve your school by continuing to aim for the very best in every subject you study.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds  
Lead inspector