

Birmingham Muslim School

Bisley Works, Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham, B11 2PZ

Inspection dates

9–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness

Adequate 3

Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Adequate	3
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- Pupils' achievement is adequate, but inconsistent. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 but too much variation remains in Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching and the curriculum are adequate. There is not enough consistently good teaching in Key Stage 2 to ensure good achievement. The curriculum does not provide a good level of challenge for all pupils.
- Though pupils' behaviour and personal development has several strengths, it is not good because in adequate lessons pupils' attitudes to learning are not as strong. Attendance remains low and punctuality is poor for too many pupils.
- Pupils' welfare, health and safety are adequately promoted. It is not good because arrangements to promote good behaviour are not equally and consistently well applied across the school.
- Leadership and management are adequate. Leaders have been successful in improving many, but not all, aspects of the school. Some inconsistencies remain in pupils' achievement and the quality of provision.
- The school's self-evaluation and improvement plan do not identify whole-school needs and future targets for pupils' achievement as precisely as they could.

The school has the following strengths

- Achievement is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2.
- Leadership, provision and achievement in Arabic studies are outstanding.
- The school creates a very positive Islamic ethos that fosters personal development well. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the vast majority is good.

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 half a day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by seven teachers, looked at pupils' work, met with the headteacher, other leaders, groups of pupils and spoke informally to parents.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' attainment, monitoring reports of teaching and school improvement plans. They checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- No responses had been received on Parent View at the time of the inspection. Inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents and carers to surveys carried out by the school and eight responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Joanne Harvey, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michelle Winter

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Birmingham Muslim School is an independent day school that provides full-time education for boys and girls aged from 4 to 11 years from families within and beyond the Muslim community in the Small Heath area of Birmingham.
- The school was established in 2001 in a disused industrial unit. Until recently it has been privately owned by the proprietor who is the husband of the headteacher. The school is now run by the Albayan Education Foundation Ltd which is a registered charity. The headteacher and the proprietor are trustees of the charity along with a parent and a member of the local community.
- Pupils and staff come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A very large number of pupils, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are at the early stages of learning to speak English. There are no pupils attending the school who have a disability or special educational needs.
- The school is registered for 120 pupils. There are currently 92 pupils on roll, taught in six classes. There is one class per year group from Reception to Year 4. Years 5 and 6 are taught in the same class. Of the 16 pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, none are in receipt of the government's entitlement to nursery education.
- The school aims to provide its pupils with an excellent standard of education and to strive for moral excellence through the teaching of Islam.
- The school's last full inspection was in June 2010. A progress monitoring inspection took place in March 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, to at least good by:
 - using precise assessments to plan lessons that are always at the right level of difficulty and which challenge pupils of all abilities, but particularly the most able, to make at least good progress
 - ensuring that teachers check for and address any misconceptions swiftly, and change their plans on the spot if necessary if they find work is too easy or too hard
 - ensuring that written and spoken feedback helps all pupils to improve their work and that pupils have the opportunity to address any comments made
 - ensuring that teachers make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn in lessons
 - ensuring that adults manage behaviour consistently and in accordance with the agreed policy
 - ensuring that additional adults contribute well to good learning in lessons.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - strengthening systems for monitoring pupils' behaviour and for working with parents, carers and pupils to convince them of the importance of coming to school and on time every day
 - strengthening the school's self-evaluation so that it reflects its needs precisely
 - ensuring that plans for improvement include targets for pupils' achievement, timelines and points to measure their success.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

Pupils' achievement is adequate overall. Significant improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the progress monitoring inspection visit ensure that children get off to a good start. Children start with a range of levels of knowledge and skills, but they are often below those expected for their age in their communication and language skills. However, they progress well and most catch up with the levels expected in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1, including those for whom English is their second or third language.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to progress well. At the end of Year 1, pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) exceeds that of most children of a similar age. The majority of pupils in Year 2 are on track to exceed the levels expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and Arabic. A key factor in this success is the more effective teaching of phonics, not only in English but also in Arabic, right from the start. Pupils quickly become enthusiastic readers, and make an early start to using their phonics skills in their writing. Specialist teachers of Arabic studies and the Qur'an continue to set high expectations and clear targets for the knowledge and understanding that pupils can achieve throughout school. They ensure that pupils exceed the levels expected for their age. More opportunities for practical, hands-on experiences in mathematics for younger children are ensuring that they are better able to apply their skills and solve problems independently.

In Key Stage 2, the picture is more varied because the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress over time and achieve well. Periods of good progress mask times of underachievement. Consequently, progress and attainment are adequate. The school provides effective extra support for those who find learning more difficult to make sure that they do not get left behind. Those pupils who have attended the school from Reception to Year 6 reach the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics. Not enough more-able pupils exceed the levels expected for their age. Pupils who do not attend school regularly or who are persistently late and miss vital learning times often do not make as much progress as other pupils. Additional support is given for pupils learning to speak English so that they make similar progress to their peers.

The introduction of more opportunities to write at length and in 'special books' is starting to have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing. Some teachers still rely on commercial schemes for mathematics which results in pupils too often carrying out work which does not challenge the most able to reach their full potential.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Adequate

Pupils' behaviour and their personal development are adequate. Pupils' behaviour in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 lessons is good. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of them and, as a result, they have positive attitudes to learning, are thoroughly engaged and enjoy lessons a great deal. Good behaviour is not as consistently evident in Key Stage 2 because in some classes clear routines and high expectations are not always the norm. School leaders are aware that attendance in most classes is low and too many pupils arrive late to school.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, has many strengths. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at school because they all know each other and because of the systems that adults follow to keep them safe. Parents and carers echo these positive views. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take and

say that incidents are rare and dealt with swiftly. They promote anti-bullying strategies themselves, for example, by making their own video during literacy lessons. They are equipped with an excellent knowledge of practices in Islam through the study of the Qur'an, religious education and the Islamic ethos of the school. The impact of this is strongly evident in pupils' manners and the values they demonstrate. The vast majority are respectful and caring towards each other and to adults around them. There is an appropriate programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Pupils learn how to respect the criminal and civil law, and the importance of holding balanced views. The school teaches its pupils about other cultures and religions, and how to live in harmony with other communities through the teaching of religious education, PSHE and Islamic Studies. They have many opportunities to take part in the life of the local and wider community, and contribute to local, national and international charities. They engage in visits of cultural interest which support their cultural development well. They have rewarding partnerships with other schools and visits to other places of worship. Visitors are regularly invited to talk to pupils, such as representatives of the fire and police services. These visits help them to develop their understanding of English public institutions.

Quality of teaching

Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate. Some good teaching was seen during the inspection, particularly in the younger year groups but there is not enough of this good practice to secure consistently good progress for all pupils in Key Stage 2. The best lessons seen involved teachers planning activities that challenged pupils of all abilities to learn well. Teachers used strong subject knowledge to ensure accuracy and inspire pupils. They used carefully chosen questions to check on every pupil's understanding. They addressed misconceptions and changed their plans immediately if work was too easy or too hard. This is not always the case.

Sometimes teachers do not make clear exactly they want pupils to learn. They talk for too long before letting pupils get on with their work and do not check often enough if everyone in the class is learning as well as they should. Too often in the weaker lessons pupils all carry out a similar task. Therefore, though pupils who find learning more difficult get appropriate help to complete the task, the most able are not stretched to reach their potential.

Some teachers give helpful spoken and written feedback. However, marking does not always help pupils to improve quickly enough or pupils do not get the opportunity to address the comments the teacher has made in their book. Occasionally, additional adults concentrate on getting pupils to complete tasks rather than making sure that they are challenged to learn as well as they should.

Systems to assess pupils' learning have improved. Teachers fill in helpful grids to keep a check on pupils' attainment. The most effective teachers are filling these in accurately and using them to plan activities which challenge all pupils to do well. This is always the case in Islamic subjects for example, and most often the case for the younger year groups. On occasions, the information on the grid does not precisely match the level of work achieved by pupils as demonstrated in their work books, or the information is not used well enough to inform teachers' planning.

Quality of curriculum

Adequate

The curriculum is adequate and covers all of the required areas of learning. The improvements to the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been so significant that it is no longer inadequate and now meets requirements well. Children enjoy engaging topic themes such as 'mini beasts'. Different activities which follow the same integrated theme and for each area of the curriculum reinforce children's learning well. These are enjoyed indoors and outdoors, and there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those initiated by the children themselves. Similarly, in Key Stage 1 the curriculum meets pupils' needs well through many active, hands-on experiences and opportunities to develop pupils' ability to talk about their work, and to work successfully independently. Throughout the school there is an appropriate balance between secular

subjects and other subjects. Schemes of work meet requirements and ensure progression. The curriculum is not good because it does not result in good achievement for pupils in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. It does not ensure that enough 'high fliers' exceed the levels expected for their age.

Strong outcomes are achieved through the religious studies programme. This is exemplified, for example, in pupils' high levels of enthusiasm for and success achieved in Qur'an competitions, both within and beyond the school. The Islamic studies programme provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss faith, moral codes and the challenges faced in life beyond school. A great many enrichment activities are offered. These include many trips to local museums and other cultural centres. Good use is made of local facilities, such as The Ackers Centre for outdoor pursuits where pupils enjoy tobogganing and archery, for example.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Adequate

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is adequate and all of the independent school regulations are met. Discussions with pupils indicate that they feel safe and secure at the school. Parents and carers spoken to confirm that they believe this to be the case. Strong bonds of trust and respect are evident between adults and staff at the school.

Policies for child protection, health and safety and anti-bullying are effective, well known and consistently implemented by staff. Welfare, health and safety is not good because, although the behaviour policy meets requirements and in much of the school it is correctly applied to good effect, not all staff are clear and consistent enough in the way they apply the system of rewards and sanctions in lessons, so as to ensure good behaviour.

Effective procedures are in place to ensure that all child protection requirements are fully met. The designated officer has attended high-level training and all other staff have been appropriately trained. All checks and other information about the suitability of adults for working with children are recorded on a single central register, as required. The admission and attendance registers meet requirements.

Risk assessments are regularly carried out around the school site and any issues dealt with promptly. All off-site visits are subject to risk assessments. An appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid, and school leaders ensure that staff training is kept up-to-date. All the checks relating to fire safety and maintenance are carried out on a regular basis and electrical appliances are checked by a qualified contractor.

Leadership and management

Adequate

Leadership and management are adequate. Senior school leaders have played an effective role in school improvement since the time of the last inspection when the school failed several regulations and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage was judged to be inadequate. All necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the school meets all regulatory requirements. Leadership, the quality of teaching and the curriculum, and the quality of the indoor and outdoor environment for learning have been significantly improved so that the Early Years Foundation Stage is now good. There have been other improvements to the quality of teaching. However, leaders have astutely recognised that leadership and management is not yet good because there is more to be done to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently ensuring good achievement for pupils throughout the school.

Staff and parents expressed their support for school leaders and for the positive ethos promoted in the school, along with a strong team spirit. Senior leaders monitor the quality of classroom practice. Training is provided to help teachers to improve. Not all teachers have been equally quick

to reflect and respond to the guidance they have been given. Leaders keep track of pupils' attainment but they have not looked closely enough at how quickly pupils make progress as they move through the different phases of the school. They have suitable plans for improvement, but these do not give precise targets or deadlines for what pupils and staff should be achieving as a result of their monitoring, evaluation and improvement work. School leaders and staff work hard to promote equality, but recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that all more-able pupils achieve as well as they can.

Parents and carers receive all of the required information. The school's website, newsletters and prospectus are informative. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their child's progress. They say that they are happy with the quality of education provided and with the personal development of their children. Appropriate procedures are in place for handling complaints. The school's accommodation is adequate.

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/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	133521
Inspection number	422754
DfE registration number	330/6102

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	Muslim
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Albayan Educational Foundation Ltd
Chair	Ghoma Abdrabba
Headteacher	Aisha Abdrabba
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,782
Telephone number	0121 766 8129
Fax number	N/A
Email address	info@muslimschool.org.uk

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