

Al-Aqsa School

The Wayne Way, Leicester, LE5 4PP

Inspection dates

7 May 2014

Reason for inspection

The inspection was undertaken by Ofsted at the request of the Registration Authority, following concerns that the school may not be meeting some of the requirements in parts 1-4 of the standards for registration. The inspection also sought to clarify the names of the current senior leadership team, and the names of the current trustees, including the Chair, in view of some uncertainty over these.

Conclusions

The school has a written curriculum policy which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work in most subjects. However, the school does not have a scheme of work to outline how pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) should be taught as they move through the school. There is some provision for PSHE, for example, through school assemblies. However, the lack of structure in the planning of pupils' progressive development of knowledge and skills as they move through the school, and in ensuring that the school's aims are met through the PSHE curriculum, mean that requirements are not met. The planned religious education (RE) curriculum in Key Stage 3 takes into account other faiths and beliefs. However, the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 focuses on Islamic Studies, rather than RE. School leaders believe that pupils learn about other faiths and beliefs through Islam. However, there is no evidence in pupils' books or in teachers' planning that pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are taught about other faiths and beliefs in sufficient depth. These shortcomings mean that regulatory requirements in relation to the curriculum, and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are not met.

Classroom resources are lacking in science in Key Stage 3, and in supporting outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Textbooks are used frequently in lessons to support learning but are often in a poor state of repair. The school has a very good range of books to support pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Islamic faith. However, there are very few age-appropriate books available in classrooms and in library areas to support pupils' understanding of other faiths. When combined, these issues mean that regulatory requirements are not met.

An appropriate range of on-going assessments, linked to National Curriculum levels, is used by staff to support the planning of pupils' learning, and to form developmental targets for pupils. However, although school staff moderate pupils' assessments within the school, there are currently no forms of external assessment or moderation, including at the end of each key stage. The assessment of pupils' performance in foundation subjects in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 also lacks rigour. When combined, these shortcomings mean that accurate comparisons with the national norms cannot be assured, and regulatory requirements are not met.

Shortcomings in the school's safeguarding policy mean that the school does not meet the

regulatory requirement in relation to safeguarding pupils. The school's safeguarding policy and procedures lack clarity, do not make reference to the latest statutory guidance ('Keeping Children Safe in Education, April 2014), and do not consistently outline the correct procedures to follow in the event of a safeguarding concern arising at the school. For example, in the event of a safeguarding concern arising, the policy states that it is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding officer to ensure liaison with Ulama (Islamic scholars) and relevant outside agencies. This does not comply with statutory safeguarding procedures and would bring the confidentiality of safeguarding concerns into question. The policy does not specify that the local authority designated officer should be contacted. The policy also states that 'the Shari'ah and the law of the land will be the prime arbiters in child protection concerns.' This is inappropriate as the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and national statutory guidance alone underpin all child protection reporting procedures. The school's safeguarding policy makes no reference to the school's approach to female genital mutilation, drugs, radicalisation, or a number of the other additional issues referred to in the latest statutory safeguarding guidance, which would support pupils in keeping safe. Staff have received up-to-date safeguarding training and have increased the number of designated staff trained at the higher level, in line with the recommendation the school received at the time of its last inspection, in December 2013.

The school has an anti-bullying policy in place. However, the policy fails to meet requirements because no reference is made to the risks of cyber-bullying. Discussions with pupils during the inspection indicated that they had little awareness of the concept of cyber-bullying.

There is evidence that the school does all it can to check the suitability of proprietors and staff, and has robust procedures to ensure that checks will be maintained to a high standard. Consequently, all regulatory requirements in relation to the suitability of staff and proprietors are met.

The names of the current senior leadership team, and the names of the current board of trustees, including the Chair, were clarified during the inspection.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school requires improvement and must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), and associated requirements

The curriculum

- The school should ensure that there is a curriculum policy set out in writing which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and that the curriculum is implemented effectively. Paragraph 2(1)
- The school should ensure that appropriate provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos. Paragraph 2(2)(f)

The quality of teaching and assessment

- The school should ensure that classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and that they are used effectively Paragraph 3(f)
- The school should ensure that there is a framework in place by which pupils' performance can be evaluated accurately by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents, and/or by national norms. Paragraph 4

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- The school should ensure that pupils are assisted to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions Paragraph 5(a)(v)

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The school should ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and that the arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Paragraph 7
- The school should ensure that there is an effective anti-bullying strategy in place and that it is implemented. Paragraph 10

Inspection team

Jeremy Spencer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- This is a non-selective school which promotes a Muslim ethos. All pupils attending the school originate from Muslim families, but the school is happy to accept pupils from any faith.
- The school admits children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 9.
- The school is located in two adjacent buildings, which were previously local authority maintained schools. The school is situated in a residential area, close to the centre of Leicester.
- There are currently 264 pupils on roll at the school. There are no pupils who currently have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has a number of aims, including 'to develop the whole personality of pupils with Tauheed at the core and Islam as the main focus of their lives; to develop an understanding of, and respect for, the differences that exist in multi-cultural, multi-faith British society;' and, 'to ensure that young people enjoy their life at school and develop a love of learning and a strong desire to continue their education as a lifelong experience.'

School details

Unique reference number	134809
Inspection number	446365
DfE registration number	856/6017
<p>This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.</p>	
Type of school	Muslim primary and secondary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Proprietor	Al-Aqsa Schools Trust
Headteacher	Ataullah Parkar
Date of previous school inspection	19 December 2013 (Bridge Schools Inspectorate) 8 November 2007 (Ofsted)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,650-£1,800
Telephone number	0116 2760953
Email address	admin@alaqsaschool.co.uk

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