

Al-Ashraf Primary School

Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, Stratton Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL1 4HB

Inspection dates

17–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness

Good **2**

Achievement of pupils

Good 2

Quality of teaching

Good 2

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good 2

Leadership and management

Good 2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school because

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress in all subjects and reach high standards.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good, and is sometimes outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and plan interesting activities, so pupils enjoy learning.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. They are confident that the school keeps pupils safe, and teaches them well.
- Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the work of the school. Pupils develop well as thoughtful, tolerant and responsible young people.
- Good school leadership, including that of governors, ensures that teaching and achievement continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although school leaders check the progress being made by individual pupils, they do not analyse this information closely enough to gain a strategic overview of the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Teachers do not always encourage pupils to achieve the highest standards of presentation and handwriting in their work.

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

- The inspection was carried out with one day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed 10 lessons, two of which were joint observations carried out with school leaders. All classes were observed. Inspectors observed the school’s Islamic education provision accompanied by an Arabic interpreter, and made a number of shorter visits to observe pupils at work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at their work. They spoke to pupils informally about their views of the school and observed them at play during breaks.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and with staff, school leaders and governors.
- Inspectors spoke with a small number of parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the 17 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 25 responses to the staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including: the school’s own review of its strengths and weaknesses; its plans for improvement; records of the quality of teaching and information on pupils’ progress and attainment. Inspectors also examined records of pupils’ behaviour and attendance, and at how the school keeps pupils safe.
- All pupils in the Reception Year and in Key Stage 1 were out of school on an educational visit on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Bennett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Al-Ashraf Primary School is an independent Muslim day school. It opened in September 2006.
- The school is registered for 180 pupils. Currently, there are 160 boys and girls on roll, aged from four to 11 years. The school has grown in recent years and now contains classes from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- The school is located in the Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, a three-storey building close to the centre of Gloucester. It shares its premises and management with the Al-Ashraf Nursery, which is separately registered. Inspection reports for the nursery are available on the Ofsted website.
- The large majority of pupils are of Indian or Pakistani heritage, with smaller numbers from a range of different backgrounds. Very few pupils are in the early stages of learning English.
- The school follows the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements for younger children and the English National Curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2, supplemented by daily Islamic education sessions.
- There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified a small number of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The school aims to deliver education in stimulating and challenging ways, and to create tolerant individuals who respect and appreciate others, their cultural background, feelings and views from an Islamic perspective.
- The school was last inspected in October 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Analyse information on pupils' progress more closely to give school leaders a strategic overview of the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Improve the standards of presentation and handwriting of some pupils.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- Children join the school in the Reception Year with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. By the time they leave the school, in Year 6, their standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. This represents good achievement over time.
- Inspectors' checks of pupils' work confirm that pupils are making good progress in all subjects and in all year groups.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from their low starting points because they are well taught. By the end of the Reception Year they have caught up, and they are at the expected level of development for their age.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress. Their standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are above average.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. In 2013 the standards reached by pupils in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach similarly high standards in 2014.
- Pupils learn to read successfully. Younger pupils understand phonics (the sounds that letters make) well, so that they are able to work out unfamiliar words confidently. Older pupils are enthusiastic readers who enjoy a range of books.
- Pupils' skills in mathematics develop well because the pupils learn to calculate accurately, and apply their skills to solve problems in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in their Islamic studies and in spoken and written Arabic. They achieve high standards and many older pupils read with confidence from the Qur'an.
- The school's most able pupils make good progress because they are set appropriately challenging tasks.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar good progress to other pupils because their needs are identified early and they receive effective individual support from teaching assistants.
- The writing skills of pupils develop well because they are given opportunities to write at length in different subjects. Some pupils do not present their work tidily or develop neat handwriting.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Teaching across the school is consistently good, and some is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and know their pupils well. They plan lessons which take into account the needs of more-able and less-able pupils.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and positive. Pupils told inspectors that teachers make learning fun. As a result, pupils enjoy learning, work hard and want to do well.
- Teachers' marking is detailed and frequent, and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils are given the chance to respond to this advice. This creates a useful dialogue in exercise books about pupils' learning.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Younger pupils learn the sounds that letters make in daily sessions which are closely matched to pupils' different levels of ability. Older pupils read regularly and are encouraged to reflect on and write about the books they have read to demonstrate their understanding.
- Pupils are set regular homework which they complete diligently. The school successfully encourages parents to support their children in doing this.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants. These pupils are set short-term targets to achieve, and their progress is carefully checked, so they make good progress.

- Teachers do not always encourage all pupils, especially those in Key Stage 2, to present their work tidily, or to keep their handwriting neat. Younger pupils practise writing neatly in handwriting lessons, but they do not always transfer these skills to their writing in other subjects.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Parents have no concerns about pupils' behaviour, and no pupils have been excluded from the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive, so almost no time is lost in lessons to poor behaviour. The pupils also behave well around the school. They are polite, courteous and thoughtful in the way they interact with teachers, visitors and each other. They speak confidently to visitors and talk proudly about their school.
- Pupils enjoy school and learning. They understand the importance of good behaviour and doing well at school. They appreciate the rewards they get for working hard and behaving well. If any pupils behave badly, teachers' sanctions focus on getting pupils to reflect on their actions so they do not repeat them.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety all meet the requirements of the independent school standards.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school. All parents who responded to the survey agreed. All necessary checks to keep pupils safe are made. Risk assessments for activities both in and out of school are carried out conscientiously. The school site is kept secure. Pupils are taught to stay safe, and are aware of potential dangers, such as those posed by using the internet.
- Pupils say bullying is very rare. School records confirm this. Pupils are confident that any bullying would stop if they told an adult. All groups of pupils get on well together.
- Pupils learn about different cultures and religions. Pupils from other schools with different faiths visit the school, and pupils from Al-Ashraf visit them in return. Discussions with pupils revealed they know about festivals such as Christmas and Diwali. As a result, they appreciate the value of tolerance and the need to respect people from different cultures and faiths.
- The school encourages pupils to take on responsibilities such as membership of the school council, being prefects and supervising younger pupils at lunch times. They learn about various British institutions, for example when visitors such as the police come to the school to talk about their work.
- Pupils' attendance rates are consistently high, and their punctuality is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because when teaching does not fully engage them, some pupils lose focus.

Leadership and management

Good

- The leadership and management of the school, including that of middle leaders, are good. As a result, pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour and safety are all good.
- School leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils. They make regular checks on the quality of teaching and set teachers appropriate targets for improvement. Teachers are appreciative of the support they receive to help them improve their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- The school makes regular checks on the progress of all pupils. However, school leaders do not analyse this information in a way that easily gives an overview of how well different groups of pupils are performing, for example how well the school's most-able and least-able pupils are doing, or the progress of boys compared to that of girls.
- School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their plans for improvement focus on the right areas, and contain clear actions, timescales and arrangements

for checking the progress of the actions taken. As a result, school leaders have made significant progress in improving the school since the previous inspection, and are well placed to make further improvements.

- The school's curriculum provides pupils with an interesting range of subjects and activities. This helps them to enjoy school, and develops their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. Pupils develop a good understanding of their Islamic faith, and make good progress in spoken and written Arabic. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of trips and visitors, and by a number of after-school clubs and activities. School leaders audit the curriculum to ensure that pupils are not exposed to bias in any form.
- The building is suitably adapted for school use and enables pupils to learn well. It is clean and well maintained. School leaders use the limited outdoor space well to develop pupils' physical well-being. There are appropriate facilities for the care of children who are sick or injured during the school day.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the work of the school. Pupils learn to think about right and wrong through their study of the Islamic faith, and through studying other faiths and beliefs. As a result, pupils develop well as sociable, thoughtful, tolerant and responsible young people.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well, and ensures that discrimination is not tolerated.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents and carers, who are very supportive of the school and its leaders. They receive all the information to which they are entitled. Parents told inspectors that they value the wealth of information available on the school's website. The school arranges training sessions for parents on how to provide additional support for their children's learning in English and mathematics.
- The school's governors are actively involved in its drive for improvement. They meet frequently and individual governors are assigned specific tasks. They drive forward many initiatives, such as improving the school environment, raising funds and planning strategically for the future. They know how well the school is performing, including the quality of teaching, how good teachers are rewarded and how any underperformance in teaching is tackled. Governors pay close attention to data on pupils' performance. They ask searching questions of school leaders about, for example, pupils' progress, and are aware of the need to check more closely the progress of different groups of pupils. Governors make sure that the school's finances are sound, and ensure that all safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	135097
Inspection number	422775
DfE registration number	916/6081

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 day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al-Madani Educational Trust
Chair	Mr Shahid M Vaid
Headteacher	Mr Abdullah Patel
Date of previous school inspection	30 September–1 October 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£650–£1000
Telephone number	01452 503533
Email address	admin@al-ashraf.gloucs.sch.uk

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