

Normanton House School

Normanton House, Village Street, Derby, DE23 8DF

Inspection dates	24–26 June 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well in all stages of the school, making better than the expected progress from their starting points, including in English and mathematics.
- Teachers plan lessons which give pupils of all abilities the opportunity and motivation to make good progress.
- The school has an extensive curriculum, which includes all the required secular areas of learning, and Islamic studies.
- Trustees and school leaders work effectively to create high expectations, resulting in rapidly improving teaching and achievement. It serves its community well.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They are polite, happy, inquisitive and enjoy learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small number of the most able pupils do not always make rapid progress and achieve what they are capable of.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but have not formalised this in a comprehensive improvement plan.
- Teaching does not always make full use of the school's assessment information to ensure activities are not too easy or too difficult, particularly for the most able pupils.

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 and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons or sessions.
- Inspectors also observed prayers, examples of extra-curricular activities and heard pupils read. Discussions were held with the trustees, the headteacher, middle leaders, parents and pupils.
- The inspectors checked the school's compliance with the standards for independent schools. They viewed a wide range of documentation including the single central register, policies, risk assessments, schemes of work, performance data, information for parents and pupils' work.
- The inspectors also considered 15 responses to Ofsted's 'Parent View', 22 staff questionnaires and the 'point in time' survey completed by ten pupils earlier in the year.

Inspection team

Peter McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Brewerton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Normanton House is an independent Islamic day school in Normanton, near to Derby city centre. It admits girls and boys from four to 14 years of age. There are currently 119 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are from Pakistani and Bangladeshi families who were born in the United Kingdom.
- No pupil currently has a statement of special educational needs, and none is at the early stages of acquiring English.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class for children aged four and five years old. There are currently ten children in the Reception class; none is in receipt of the nursery education grant.
- The school opened in 2003. The primary school is located in a large refurbished and extended Victorian building. The secondary school is based in a house less than a mile away.
- The school is owned by the Al Akram Trust and provides a mix of Islamic and secular teaching. It aims to 'offer children a firm foundation in Islamic education developing in them a deep love for ALLAH (The Exalted), the Quran and his Prophets (salutations and peace be upon them) as well as offering a broad, holistic primary education to enable every pupil to achieve their fullest potential, in the comfort of a supportive and stimulating Islamic ethos to become a positive and responsible member and contributor to the wider society.'
- The school was last inspected in March 2011. A new headteacher was appointed in 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching on achievement, so that all pupils make outstanding progress, particularly the most able older pupils by:
 - making sure that teachers use assessment information effectively to plan activities for all groups of pupils in order to make them think harder about their learning
 - checking the progress pupils make in lessons and adapting the work so that learning proceeds at a rapid rate.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing a systematic method of recording and evaluating identified strengths and weaknesses to improve key aspects of the school on a regular basis in a school improvement plan.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- All groups of pupils make good progress. Achievement in all year groups is improving year on year. Progress in English and mathematics is good and provides a sound foundation for good progress in other subjects. Pupils' attainment in these key subjects is usually well above average.
- All pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Parents are very pleased with their children's' achievement, as one parent said, 'My sons make very good progress here.'
- Children enter the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age. Only a quarter of pupils are at expected levels. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, at least three in every four children are working at a good level of development, and at least a quarter exceeds this. This represents good and often outstanding progress in almost all areas of learning.
- At the same time, pupils make good progress in Islamic Studies. As preparation for reading the Qur'an, Reception children begin to learn Arabic and are already able to copy words accurately.
- Pupils who join the school after Reception often have low achievement on entry but make rapid progress because the school puts in place an individual education plan to support them.
- Good achievement continues throughout all year groups in the primary stage. This continues in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics. As early as Year 1, the most able pupils write correct, extended accounts of things they have done without directly copying from other books. In mathematics, they have good understanding of number and use it in other learning, such as telling the time, understanding money and comparing shapes.
- Progress in Islamic studies continues to be good. Pupils have the skills in Arabic to read the Qur'an aloud fluently (Hifz) in preparation for their duty to learn it by heart. They also have good writing skills and can take dictation accurately.
- Secondary pupils also make good progress. Although some enter the secondary stage, with above average attainment, they continue to make more progress than others of their age. This is particularly so in science and mathematics where several pupils have already passed GCSE at grade A*-C in science and mathematics, even in Year 7.
- Despite this, pupils' work in their books shows that there are a small number of more able pupils who are not sufficiently challenged to complete harder work, particularly in Key Stage 3. They often complete too much of the same work and their learning is not moved on at a fast enough pace to make them think harder.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge which entuses the pupils to want to learn and make good progress. They learn well because teachers always check what they have remembered from their previous lessons, and they make clear links with new learning. This is done during

lessons and at the beginning of the following lesson.

- Teachers have high expectations and can rely on pupils to carrying on working even when they are not supervised. They are skilled in asking the right pupil the right question to ensure that they learn well and show how well they understand.
- In the Reception class teachers follow up ideas which come from the children, and they capitalise on their interests to maximise learning and progress, particularly in their communication skills. The children went out to write Arabic script on the wall. As they did so the children noticed insects in a crack in the wall. The teacher skilfully developed this point of interest to talk about ants and beetles and finish with the singing of 'Incey wincey spider.'
- Teachers usually plan their lessons well to ensure that pupils have work which enables them to make good progress from different starting points. They use assessment information to make sure that pupils have work which will stretch them. Occasionally, some work is not demanding enough for the most able pupils, who could achieve even more.
- Relationships in the classroom are outstanding. Pupils respect their teachers and enjoy their lessons. One young pupil said 'Miss makes you happy.' Pupils benefit from opportunities to work together and become confident learners. They enjoy range of educational visits which broaden their knowledge of the local community and British institutions.
- Reading and writing are skilfully taught throughout the school in English, Urdu and Arabic. Pupils make comparable progress in all three languages because they learn them together from an early age.
- The school's assessment framework enables staff and pupils to take part in recording progress. Teachers keep records of pupils' progress which are brought up-to-date every half term. This information is sent to parents three times a year. Teachers know pupils' attainment on entry and track their progress. Pupils keep target sheets in their exercise books and shade in each part as they achieve it. They all know how well they are doing and what they need to do next. This enables teachers to keep an accurate view of achievement and to plan lessons so that pupils make at least good progress.
- Marking is much improved. Most work, particularly in English, is carefully marked and pupils are helped to improve by teachers' comments and targets. Some teachers give oral feedback, which pupils like. Marking of secondary students' work is especially good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding both in lessons and around the school. They have excellent attitudes to their learning, and work well on their own initiative, choosing when to move to another task. They enjoy learning and take pride in their achievements. They like to gain knowledge by discovering things for themselves.
- Staff supervision is good but rarely needed. Pupils understand the need to respect others and know that any slight misbehaviour means that their name is put on the 'sad side' of the board. They say it rarely happens. They say, 'The Qur'an teaches us to be polite. It says "Do not have fights".'

- Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly, they are punctual and they always work very hard, even when unsupervised. They want to take their learning to the next step, asking questions and displaying a thirst for knowledge. The reading of the Qur'an (Hifz), a voluntary activity after school, is a model of self-discipline.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They demonstrate high levels of self-confidence, self control and sense of responsibility.
- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school and the broader community. They learn much from the Islamic curriculum. Their faith is at the centre of their lives. They take many opportunities to discover other faiths through lessons and visits. They study British culture and Islamic culture side-by-side through history. They are helped to understand the multicultural community in their home city of Derby. As a result, pupils are tolerant and highly respectful of other faiths and religions.
- Pupils' social development involves helping their friends and others. They visit a nearby nursing home; they raise money for charity. Visits to police, fire service and local library and post office give pupils a good understanding of public institutions and services and all issues are presented in a balanced way, exploring different points of view. Pupils understand the need to ensure their own safety and that of others. They have clear ideas of right and wrong and practise them well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All necessary policies and practice are in place to ensure that the school is a safe environment for its pupils and staff. The school is meticulous in ensuring that all these are implemented.
- Pupils strongly agree that they like school and that they feel safe. They insist that there is no bullying at the school. Parents, too, believe that the school promotes good behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is often commended by the local community, for example the coach at the local tennis centre contacted the school to praise pupils' behaviour.

Leadership and management

Good

- Trust members and the headteacher communicate high levels of enthusiasm, commitment and ambition for the school. They value the place of the school in the local community and raise additional funds to keep fees at an affordable level. They have the confidence and support of all staff and of parents.
- The Headteacher, together with other members of the leadership team secure a positive learning environment where good teaching and outstanding behaviour flourish on a daily basis.
- The headteacher and middle leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching. This together with the appraisal process of setting targets for improvement with individual teachers, results in good teaching which is improving. Teachers share effective practice and the outcomes of their training with other colleagues.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They use

their monitoring information well and evaluate this accurately, including information about pupil progress. This information is used well to plan for improvement. The upward improvement of the quality of teaching and pupil achievement are concerted and sustained. However, they have yet to collate all of this information effectively into a cohesive improvement plan.

- The school's curriculum is very broad. The secular curriculum provides all areas of learning required in the independent schools standards, and is particularly effective in developing pupils literacy and numeracy skills. The Islamic curriculum ensures that pupils need not attend other classes in the community and allows them to spend more time in their families. Together they result good achievement, outstanding spiritual experience and good preparation for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils learn Arabic and Urdu, enjoy a range of musical, sporting and other enrichment activities. They visit the local library, police station and churches. This all contributes to outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Through the teachings of the Qur'an staff help pupils to reject extreme views. The school denounces the violence which sets Muslim against Muslim. In keeping with these teachings, the school insists that conflicts are presented as unacceptable.
- Safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures are robust and meet all requirements. All the required staff training in relation to this and other procedures to keep pupils safe are in place.

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	134294
Inspection number	442945
DfE registration number	831/6006
Type of school	Primary and secondary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4-14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Number of part time pupils	2
Proprietor	Al-Akram Trust
Chair	Dr Piracha
Headteacher	Miss Anissa Iqbal
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800
Telephone number	01332 769333
Email address	admin@alakramtrust.org.uk

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