

Avecinna Academy

Sycamore Road, Birmingham, B6 5UH

Inspection dates	23–25 September 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The curriculum does not make sufficient provision for physical education for girls at Key Stage 4, and for the human and social area of learning for boys at Key Stage 3. As a result, two of the independent school standards are not met.
- Lower attaining students are not provided with consistent support and help with their learning across all subjects and ages.
- There is not a consistent emphasis on the development of students' written grammar and spelling across all the subjects taught.
- The school's leaders are not systematically and regularly challenged or supported by any external, independent view of the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' achievement in English and mathematics is good.
- The school's leaders and managers have ensured that most students make good progress from their various starting points, and that the majority exceed nationally expected rates of progress.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently good and have a positive impact on their learning.
- Students have a good understanding and appreciation of the variety of cultures and beliefs in the local and wider communities. They benefit positively from the respectful and inclusive values taught throughout the school.
- The school's leaders have ensured that the school provides a safe and secure environment for students' learning and personal development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet 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. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed ten lessons taught by five teachers. Discussions were held with all members of staff present during the inspection.
- A number of school policies and procedures were scrutinised and discussions held with senior leaders about the implementation of these.
- Discussions were held with two groups of students. A range of students' work was discussed with them during lessons.
- The inspector considered five responses to a staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire.
- At the request of the Department of Education, consideration was given to a request for a material change to enable the school to admit up to 40 boys in the age range 11 to 17 years.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- AVECINNA ACADEMY is situated in the Aston area of Birmingham. It was first registered as an independent girls' Muslim day school in November 2013. Prior to this, it had provided education for Muslim girls as a tutorial centre since 2009.
- The academy provides full-time education for up to 60 girls in the age range 11 to 17 years. There are currently 32 girls aged 11 to 16 years on the roll of the school.
- In September 2014, the school admitted nine boys into separate classes on an upper floor of the school building.
- No student has a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of the current students are of Somali heritage and have entered the English education system from Somalia or one of a number of countries in Europe and further afield. English is not the spoken language of the home for the great majority of students. However, the majority of students speak English fluently.
- This is the school's first inspection since its registration as an independent school in November 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
 - Ensure that the curriculum policy is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work and implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1)).
 - Give students of compulsory school age a full-time education with experience in the physical, and human and social areas of learning (paragraph 2(2)(a)).
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - lower attaining students make the rate of progress of which they are capable by supporting their learning consistently across all subjects
 - there is a consistent emphasis on the quality of students' written grammar and spelling in all subjects
 - students are always clear about what they are expected to know, understand and be able to do in each lesson studied.
- Provide a suitable level of independent governance to provide challenge and support to ensure that the school's senior leaders are held to account for all aspects of the performance of the school.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Requires improvement

- The achievement of students requires improvement because not all of the required subjects are taught to all students. As a result, achievement is not good enough for some students in the human and social, and physical areas of learning.
- The majority of students enter the school during Years 9, 10 and 11 with variable previous educational experience. Most students, on entry, are attaining standards below those expected for their age.
- Most students make good progress in English and mathematics once they have settled into the expectations of the school. The majority of students make progress at a rate in excess of the national average.
- The majority of students make similarly good progress in a range of additional subjects, including science, information and communication technology (ICT) and foreign languages.
- As a result of their relatively low starting points, and limited number of years in the school, the attainment of students overall is below the national average. However, all of those students who left Year 11 in 2014 achieved a foundation or higher level GCSE grade in English and mathematics.
- A minority of students achieved five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics. A few made exceptional progress, achieving a number of A and B grades after just one year of study for GCSE examinations.
- The majority of students are able to speak and read English at a level which enables them to successfully understand the full range of subjects studied. Attainment in written English, including grammar and spelling, is less consistent.
- Students successfully apply their developing literacy, numeracy and computer skills to the tasks and activities required across the range of subjects studied.
- A small number of lower attaining students are not able to maintain the pace of learning required of them; they do not always receive immediate support to enable them to fulfil their potential.

Quality of teaching

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. This is, in part, because students are not all taught the range of subjects required by the independent school standards.
- Additional areas of improvement in teaching include the inconsistency of support and help available for students who learn more slowly and cannot maintain the pace at which most lessons are conducted.
- Students are not always made sufficiently aware of what they are expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of the tasks and activities provided for them.
- Teachers assess the quality of students' learning and progress effectively. This is achieved largely by the use of standardised tests and assessments at frequent intervals. Students' achievement in comparison with the requirements of the National Curriculum and GCSE examinations is generally well understood by staff.
- The quality of regular marking of students' work, with the exception of English, does not always draw sufficient attention to errors in grammar and spelling. Students are not given sufficient help with these technical aspects of writing.
- There are, however, a number of good features in the quality of teaching. All members of staff have high expectations for what students can achieve, and they have success in motivating students and ensuring that they maintain their concentration throughout lessons.
- The tasks and activities set by teachers have a good level of challenge and are appropriate to ensure that the middle and higher attaining students, in particular, make good progress.

- The majority of teachers enable students to take part in effective oral work as a result of good questioning techniques which require them to speak, listen and develop depth in their answers. However, this is not consistent and some good opportunities are missed to check students' understanding as the lesson progresses.
- Teachers expect students to develop their skills of analysis and interpretation, and to demonstrate appropriate reasoning in justifying their answers.
- A large majority of students make good progress in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT as a result of teaching which is suitably interesting and challenging.

Behaviour and safety of pupils**Good**

- Students' behaviour is good both in the classroom and around the school.
- The great majority of students are self-motivated and eager to learn. They demonstrate respect for their teachers and low-level disruption is rare. Students demonstrate mature skills in their ability to work independently or with each other.
- Students state that they enjoy school and that the school is, in many ways, like one big family. Their attendance is good and there is virtually no unauthorised absence.
- Students demonstrate a good understanding of the various forms of bullying, including racism and homophobic language. They can identify virtually no incidents of bullying and the school's records support this view.
- The school has suitable sanctions for dealing with the rare occasions of misbehaviour and records are maintained of any incidents and concerns. Although the details of incidents and sanctions are recorded appropriately, these records do not always make clear whether the sanctions applied result in the intended improvement in the student's behaviour.
- The school gives good attention to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. There are excellent opportunities for personal reflection and the development of mature personal values, for example in the daily assemblies and in the teaching of religious education.
- Students speak confidently about activities which inform them about different faiths and cultures, including Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism.
- The school's documentation emphasises the need for a balanced and non-partisan approach to all matters of belief and lifestyle. A commitment to these values is evident in conversations with both staff and students. They communicate a genuine awareness of the need for respect and tolerance for differences in belief and culture in the wider community.
- Students are prepared well, both in their academic and personal development, for life after school. They understand the significance of democratic processes and arrangements have just commenced to create a student council.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. All aspects of safeguarding are implemented effectively, including arrangements for the recruitment of staff, the training of staff in child protection, and arrangements and staff training for first aid.
- Arrangements for fire safety in all parts of the building are implemented effectively, including regular routine checks on equipment, and the conduct of regular emergency evacuations of the building.

Leadership and management**Requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because the regulations related to the curriculum are not met in full. The school does not make sufficient provision for the teaching of physical education to girls in Key Stage 4, and the human and social area of learning for boys at Key Stage 3.
- The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, communicates high expectations for what the students can achieve. This vision is shared consistently by all staff members and has a

positive impact on students' achievement.

- The school's senior leaders have ensured that students make good progress in English and mathematics. A suitable programme of accredited subjects at GCSE has been established.
- The proprietor and senior staff have developed suitable strategies for monitoring the progress of students; these include some observation of the quality of teaching. However, the school has no arrangements in place for an independent, external view of its work. As a result, judgements about quality rest entirely with those who are working with the students every day.
- Although much of the teaching is good, including the expertise of teachers in their specialist subjects, there are weaknesses which require attention. These restrict the extent of the progress made by some students, particularly those who find learning more difficult.
- The school's senior leaders give good attention to all aspects of students' welfare, health and safety. Students are kept safe and procedures for ensuring the appointment of suitable staff, together with the training of staff in safeguarding and risk assessment, are good.
- The management of students' behaviour is good. Students are able to focus effectively on their work in all lessons and the majority achieve well as a result.
- Senior leaders maintain good levels of communication with parents and carers. The majority of families speak only Somali in their homes and, as a result, much of the communication is oral.
- The school's ethos and values ensure that all students develop a respectful understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in the wider community. The students state overwhelming support for the quality of the school's provision. All members of staff who completed an inspection questionnaire state that they are proud to be members of staff at this school.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have achieved much that is positive in a short time since the school registered as an independent school. They are aware of the areas requiring improvement and have demonstrated the capacity to improve.
- It is recommended that the request for a material change, to admit up to 40 boys in the age range 11 to 16 years, be approved.

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	140382
Inspection number	447300
DfE registration number	330/6016

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	11–17 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mohamed Dahir
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Mohamed Dahir
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,200
Telephone number	0121 328 1824
Fax number	0121 328 0681
Email address	enquiries@avecinnaacademy.com

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