

Abu Bakr Boys School

Kent Street, Walsall, West Midlands, WS2 7AN

Inspection dates 4–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school because

- The quality of leadership and management is good. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, there have been good improvements in the quality of teaching and students' achievement since the last inspection.
- Students' achievement is good. The proportions of students making or exceeding expected rates of progress are higher than the national average.
- Students' behaviour is good. Students have very positive attitudes to their learning and take an active and willing part in lessons across all subjects.
- School leaders and staff work tirelessly to ensure that students are safe in school. All aspects of safeguarding students' welfare are implemented robustly.
- The quality of teaching in both the secular and Islamic curriculum is good. This enables students to make good progress with their learning and personal development.
- The school achieves its aim to ensure a strong Islamic environment in which students achieve well in their studies in the Alim and Hifz courses. Students are proud of their achievements in these areas, including their considerable success in committing the Quran to memory.
- The proprietor and governors work effectively with the headteacher to ensure that high expectations of what students can achieve are shared across the staff. Regular and accurate checks are carried out on the quality of teaching and learning, strongly supported by the school's external improvement partner.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' literacy skills are not outstanding. Their written communication skills, including the organisation of their ideas, handwriting, spelling, and written grammar, are not checked and corrected consistently by all staff across all subjects.
- Students are not provided with sufficient first-hand experiences of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the local and wider communities.
- Insufficient attention is given to the quality of the school environment to stimulate students' learning and personal development continuously.

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 school was inspected with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 17 lessons across the school's secular and religious curriculum; a small number of these were observed jointly with the school's external school improvement consultant.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the proprietor, the head of the Hifz department, the school's external school improvement partner and with a number of members of staff.
- A meeting was held with a group of students and informal discussions took place with a number of other students. Consideration was given to 15 questionnaires completed by staff, together with the school's summary of responses to a school questionnaire completed by 121 parents and carers. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire for these to be available for consideration.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Ann Boyle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Abu Bakr Boys School is an Islamic day school located in Walsall. The school has discontinued its boarding provision since the time of the last inspection.
- The school is registered to admit up to 300 boys in the age range 11 to 16 years; there are currently 204 boys on roll.
- No student has a statement of special educational needs and no pupil premium support is provided for students.
- The school admission policy is open to students of any faith; all current students follow the Islamic faith.
- The curriculum is provided wholly on the school site, with the exception of some local facilities used for aspects of physical education and games, and occasional use of science laboratory facilities at the Abu Bakr Girls' School in Walsall.
- The headteacher works in collaboration with the headteacher of the Abu Bakr Girls' School to review and develop the work of the school.
- The school aims to 'ensure a well-ordered atmosphere where the focus of all activities is on the quality of learning and teaching in a strong Islamic environment'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers contribute consistently to the improvement of students' literacy skills by checking and correcting how they organise their ideas, the variety of language used, untidy or illegible handwriting, errors in spelling and incorrect punctuation in their written work.
- Further develop students' understanding of the diversity of cultures and opportunities in the local and wider community by:
 - providing students with first-hand experience of collaborative activities with students from contrasting schools
 - providing off-site work experience for students in Key Stage 4.
- Further improve the quality of the learning environment by the display and celebration of students' work, including their creative and aesthetic achievements.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher set high expectations for the quality of teaching to ensure that students fulfil their academic potential across the full range of subjects taught. The quality of relationships and the strong personal development of students are promoted within the context of Islamic values.
- The school's external improvement partner gives strong and effective support to the monitoring of standards of teaching; this contributes positively to students' achievements, including external examination results which have improved in recent years.
- Senior leaders have ensured that effective training opportunities are provided to improve teachers' work in the classroom. As a result, for example, three teachers have gained qualified teacher status in the last two years and there have been good improvements in the overall quality of teaching. As yet, however, the development of students' literacy skills has not been given sufficient priority in the marking of students' work in some subjects.
- The headteacher continuously checks on the quality of all that the school provides and has produced suitable plans for further improvement. The areas for improvement identified during this inspection are largely reflected in the school's own review of its work and current improvement plans.
- Senior leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all students and to their development as productive contributors to modern Britain. This commitment is reflected in the wide range of activities provided for students to understand and reflect on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, including suitable preparation for leaving school and entering further education.
- The school's middle leaders, carrying responsibilities for example for subject development or student behaviour and attendance, contribute to the consistent implementation of policies. This ensures that students are kept safe and made aware of the challenges they face in preparing themselves suitably for life beyond school.
- The quality of relationships between staff and students, together with an appropriate curriculum, ensures that the school makes a positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, there are insufficient opportunities for first-hand experience of meeting with others from the diverse cultures represented locally and across the United Kingdom.
- All those staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire are proud to be members of the school staff and believe that the school is well led and managed. The great majority of parents and carers, similarly, agree that their boys are making good progress in their academic and personal development.
- Senior leaders ensure that all aspects of safeguarding of students are implemented rigorously and conscientiously. Senior staff have been suitably trained in safe recruitment procedures and to lead the school in effective child protection. All staff are appropriately trained to fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding, first aid, health and safety and fire safety. All the required procedures to ensure the safety of the premises are fulfilled diligently, including regular checks on all aspects of fire safety.
- Regulations regarding the premises and accommodation, information for parents and carers, and the implementation of a suitable complaints policy, are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are met. The accommodation is maintained to a suitable standard, but insufficient attention is given to the visual celebration of students' work and achievements, including their aesthetic and creative achievements.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching and students' achievement since the last inspection indicate that the school's leaders have the capacity to manage and implement further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The proprietor, who is also the Chair of the small but effective governing body, maintains a continuous check on the work of the school. He is well informed about the quality of teaching, together with the assessment data which informs his understanding of students' progress.
 - Senior leaders inform the governors of any concerns about the performance of staff and effective action is taken to ensure that issues are resolved and that the continuous progress of students is not hindered.
 - The governance of the school also benefits from regular dialogue with senior leaders at the Abu Bakr Girls' School; this promotes the critical review of provision and continuous improvement.
 - The proprietor has a forward-looking view regarding the development and expansion of the school's work. He contributes appropriately to the school's plans for continuous improvement, whilst also protecting the central Islamic vision which contributes strongly to students' personal development.
 - The governors and senior leaders have ensured that the requirements of all the independent school

standards have been met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good and has a positive impact on the quality of their learning and the standards achieved in external examinations. Relationships between staff and students are good and mutual respect is evident within classrooms and around the school.
- Students' attendance is good; students take their work seriously, concentrate well and are keen to achieve success. There are no persistent absentees. The high proportion of students who successfully memorise the Quran in their Hifz course demonstrates their commitment and willingness to persevere.
- Students' response to learning activities is good. Students listen well and contribute positively to class discussion, answering and asking questions in order to deepen their understanding. They maintain their concentration throughout lessons across the full range of subjects studied.
- Younger students occasionally take a little time to settle at the start of a lesson, but the staff mostly engage them successfully in suitable learning activities and concentration is quickly restored. Older students demonstrate mature attitudes to their studies; they value the school's reward system and are keen to ensure that they achieve the merits available for good work and attitudes.
- In their responses to questionnaires, parents, carers and staff express no concerns about students' behaviour. The school's records of incidents and sanctions support the view that students behave well and serious incidents rarely occur. Students state that they are proud to be members of the school.
- Excellent attention is given to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students develop self-confidence and the skills required to succeed in the future. All school leavers in recent years moved on to courses in further education colleges or sixth forms in local schools. Students are provided with a range of opportunities to learn about British institutions and services such as the police and national health services. They learn, for example, about democratic processes and the civil and criminal law.
- The school ensures that students have a good understanding of the diversity of beliefs and cultures in British society. Their studies in religious education, for example, introduce them to a variety of faiths and beliefs, including opportunities to meet visitors from different religions and to visit alternative places of worship. However, students have limited opportunities to take part in work experience within the wider community or to work with students from diverse backgrounds on inter-school events and projects.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students state that they feel safe in school. Levels of adult supervision are high and appropriate. Good humoured conversations around the school ensure that students are relaxed, but respectful, in their relationships with the staff.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and students recognise that the school works effectively with parents to resolve any concerns about behaviour. Students have good opportunities, through assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons, to develop a secure understanding of all forms of bullying and how to develop safe and successful personal relationships. Appropriate sanctions are available and understood by students. Fixed-term exclusion is treated as a last resort and is rarely used as a sanction.
- Senior staff are appropriately trained to ensure that procedures for the recruitment and training of staff are implemented effectively. All members of staff are trained in safeguarding and students are taught about safe lifestyles, appropriate family values and how to keep themselves safe from the risks associated with extremist ideologies.
- The school's written policies and safeguarding procedures ensure that any controversial topics are presented and considered in a balanced and non-partisan manner, and that any visitors to the school are appropriately vetted to protect the school's values and beliefs.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good, both in the secular and Islamic subjects. As a result, students achieve well and demonstrate success in externally accredited courses. Students make good progress in their Alim and Hifz studies, and those who choose to continue are well prepared for further studies in these areas.
- As a result of a rigorous programme of training for all staff, the quality of teaching in both the secular and Islamic subjects has improved. The majority of staff have a good understanding, for example, of how

activities may be planned to meet the range of abilities within a teaching group, or how effective questioning skills can develop learning skills and deepen students' understanding of their studies.

- The staff have increasingly developed successful arrangements, such as grouping or pairing students within teaching groups, to ensure that all may enjoy success. Students cooperate well and discussion of ideas, often in pairs, helps them develop their understanding at an appropriate rate. While there are no students with statements of special educational needs, students who require additional support with their learning are enabled to make good progress at an appropriate speed.
- The quality of resources for learning has improved since the last inspection. Many teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) and there is often a strong visual element to students' learning activities.
- Recent staff training in the effective use of questioning skills has had a positive impact on students' learning. Students are increasingly encouraged to reflect carefully on their understanding, to extend their analysis of information and to justify their conclusions. When encouraged, students are able to contribute enthusiastically to discussion, to present their ideas systematically, and to translate their understanding into effective written or oral presentations. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to allow students to fully develop their ideas and understanding through extended discussion.
- The learning activities in the morning Islamic curriculum do not always provide sufficient opportunities for active participation, discussion and team work. However, there have been good improvements in the teachers' understanding of how to engage and motivate students. Students enjoy, and demonstrate good understanding, for example, in their study of the history of Islam and the teaching of the prophet.
- There is a good emphasis on the development of students' reading, speaking, listening and numeracy skills. In the majority of lessons, teachers provide written tasks with a sufficient level of challenge to enable students of different abilities to demonstrate their understanding effectively. Higher ability students are encouraged to extend their learning and are prepared well for success in higher level GCSE examinations.
- The quality of teaching enables students to make good progress towards external examinations across the full range of required areas of learning, including science, ICT, the human and social, and the creative and aesthetic. Students also enjoy and benefit from a well-planned programme of physical education and sports.
- Students' work is mostly marked regularly, with an emphasis in teachers' written comments on the content and understanding demonstrated in the task. However, further attention is required to the development of students' literacy skills across the curriculum in order to raise their achievement to outstanding. Marking does not always give consistent attention to the improvement of literacy skills, including how students organise their ideas, the variety of language used, and the quality of their handwriting, spelling and punctuation.
- The school has a consistent approach to the assessment of students' progress, including regular attainment tests. The quality of assessment data provides an accurate record of the extent of students' progress over time. This information is used effectively to judge whether individual students are making expected rates of progress and to set targets for further improvement.
- The quality of teaching enables most students to maintain their focus throughout a long school day, which is supplemented with further study on Saturday mornings and through suitable homework.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The achievement of students is good. They make good progress over time across the full range of subjects studied.
- Students' starting points on entry to the school are broadly in line with national expectations, although there are a few students with low levels of attainment. As a result of good teaching, students fulfil their potential and make good progress towards good GCSE results at the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE results at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is above the national average. The proportion of students meeting or exceeding national average rates of progress from Year 7 to Year 11 in English is good, and in mathematics is exceptional.
- Students who find learning more difficult are well supported to make good progress. Teachers are increasingly skilled at ensuring that these students are provided with tasks and activities which challenge them to succeed and to make progress at an appropriate pace.
- The most able students make consistently good progress. The level of challenge in their learning ensures that their understanding is deepened at an appropriate pace, accelerating effectively to ensure good

success at the end of Year 11.

- Hifz students make excellent progress with their memorisation of the Quran and in their preparation for public recitation. Students also make good progress with their Alim studies.
- The majority of students develop strong skills in reading, comprehension and oral communication. Their progress in mathematics ensures that they develop effective skills of numeracy which they apply well to their work in other subjects. The development of their writing skills is good in English. However, across the curriculum, handwriting, spelling and punctuation develop more slowly and are not given consistent attention in the marking of work across all subjects studied.
- All students who leave the school at the end of Year 11 move on to suitable further study. The majority take up places in school sixth forms or colleges of further education. A small number moves on to successful further development of their Alim studies.
- Students' achievement across a suitable range of subjects and experiences ensures that students are well prepared to succeed on courses of further study and to take their place as active and successful citizens in adult life.

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	135483
Inspection number	442989
DfE registration number	335/6013

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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	Secondary Islamic day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Muhammad Luqman
Chair	Muhammad Luqman
Headteacher	Mohammed Ramzan
Date of previous school inspection	28–31 March 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,350
Telephone number	01922 724149
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