

# Al-Aqsa School

The Wayne Way, Leicester, LE5 4PP

## Inspection dates

26 November 2014

## Overall outcome

**Independent school standards met**

## Context of the inspection

- The inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools, in order to monitor the progress the school has made since its last inspection. An emergency inspection was carried out in May 2014, at the request of the Department for Education. The inspection found that the school failed to comply with eight regulatory requirements. These related to the quality of education provided; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; and the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- An action plan was prepared by the school to address the regulatory failures. The plan was reviewed on 28 July 2014. The Department for Education found the action plan to be satisfactory, subject to successful implementation.
- The school has applied for a material change in respect of an increase in pupil numbers from a maximum of 255 to a maximum of 292 to accommodate additional students in Years 10 and 11. The suitability of the school's facilities to accommodate this change was considered during this inspection visit. As the school will continue to meet all requirements when the pupil numbers are increased, the change is recommended for approval. However, no more than 30 additional students should be recruited into Years 10 and 11, unless additional girls' toilet facilities are provided.
- This was the first visit to the school to look at its progress in making the necessary improvements to meet regulatory requirements.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.

## Main findings

### The curriculum

- The inspection of May 2014 found that the school's curriculum policy was not supported by appropriate schemes of work for pupils' personal, social, and health education (PSHE). In its action plan, the school indicated that it would produce a new curriculum policy, complemented by an appropriate PSHE policy. In addition, school leaders undertook to ensure that there were discrete timetabled opportunities for PSHE delivery, supported by appropriate staff training. As a result of implementing its action plan, PSHE is now delivered through discrete timetabled lessons that comprise 'Life Skills' in the secondary school and PSHE in Key Stages 1 and 2. Other opportunities to develop students' knowledge and awareness are evident in assemblies, Friday prayers, and within the context of other lessons. Pupils are able to talk fluently about some of the topics they have covered recently, including their learning about different faiths. As a result, the requirements are now met.

### The quality of teaching and assessment

- The inspection of May 2014 found that classroom resources were lacking in science in Key Stage

3 and in supporting outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some textbooks were in a poor state of repair and there were very few age-appropriate books to support pupils' understanding of other faiths. The action plan indicated that the school would order appropriate resources to support these areas. As a result of implementing the action plan, these resources are greatly improved. Plans are in place for pupils to undertake more practical work in science. Pupils in EYFS benefit from increased opportunities for learning outdoors. Pupils have access now to a greater range of books to support their understanding of other faiths. As a result, the requirements are now met.

- The inspection of May 2014 found that the assessment of pupils' performance in Key Stages 1, 2, and 3 lacked rigour. In addition, there were no systems for external moderation and assessment at the end of each key stage. The school undertook to revise its assessment policy to ensure that assessments align with national norms. It, also, committed to creating and developing partnerships to enable it to undertake external moderation of teachers' assessments. As a result of implementing these actions, Key Stage 2 pupils undertook appropriate external tests in June 2014. School leaders plan to use appropriate end-of-key-stage external tests in the coming year. The two deputy headteachers have recently attended external moderation training for literacy. As a result, they have formed a partnership with two other schools to validate teachers' assessments externally for all core subjects. The requirements for this standard are now met.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- The inspection of May 2014 found that there was a lack of structure and planning for PSHE education across the school. Pupils were not taught about other faiths and beliefs in sufficient depth. In their action plan, school leaders undertook to incorporate opportunities for celebrating cultural differences in the PSHE programme. In addition, they said they would schedule a programme of assemblies and visits, with links to different religious festivals throughout the year. They committed also to extending the range of age-appropriate books to support pupils' understanding of other faiths. As a result of implementing these actions, pupils benefit now from appropriate visits to different places of worship, which link effectively with their studies in religious education lessons. They demonstrate a growing understanding of and respect for other religions, so that this requirement is now met.

### **Welfare, health and safety**

- The inspection of May 2014 found that there were a number of shortcomings in the school's safeguarding policy. The procedures for referral lacked clarity and did not make reference to the latest statutory guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', April 2014. In its action plan, the school undertook to update the safeguarding policy in order to reflect the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. They agreed to establish contact with the local authority safeguarding team and engage with the local 'Prevent' team. As a result of implementing the plan, the safeguarding policy and procedures are now robust. Staff have received appropriate training and can speak confidently about how to refer safeguarding issues, who to refer them to, and the necessity to take rapid action. They are aware of potential signs of abuse, including those relating to female genital mutilation and forced marriage. This requirement is now met.
- The inspection of May 2014 found that the anti-bullying policy made no reference to the risks of cyber-bullying and pupils had little awareness of this issue. In its action plan, the school undertook to revise the anti-bullying policy to include specific reference to cyber-bullying and to ensure that there are opportunities in the curriculum to educate children about it. As a result of implementing the plan, the anti-bullying policy has been updated and now covers all forms of bullying. Pupils have a number of opportunities in timetabled lessons to explore issues related to cyber-bullying. Pupils from a variety of year groups expressed an understanding of cyber-bullying. This requirement is now met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

**The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, and associated requirements**

## Inspection team

Julia Wright, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deirdre Duignan

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 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.
- The school admits children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 9. The primary school is open to boys and girls. The secondary school admits girls only.
- The school is registered for 255 pupils. There are currently 262 pupils on roll at the school, including 4 in Year 10. No pupils 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134809
<b>Inspection number</b>	452356
<b>DfE registration number</b>	856/6017

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 inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim primary and secondary school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	262
<b>Proprietor</b>	Al-Aqsa Schools Trust
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ataullah Parkar
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2014
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£1,650 - £1,800
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2760953
<b>Email address</b>	admin@alaqsaschool.co.uk

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