

Al-Khair School

Causeway Green Road, Oldbury, B68 8LA

Inspection dates

15-17 April 2015

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

Early years provision

Good

2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Leaders are effective and highly committed to ensuring the school's continuing development and success. They have established a culture in which each child is well cared for and has the opportunity to learn well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development extremely well, so that pupils have a very good understanding of their Islamic heritage, what it means to live in modern Britain and how they should respect others' beliefs.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is often outstanding. Pupils are kept very safe. They are highly supportive towards each other and show a strong mutual respect.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and their attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide good levels of individual support so that all groups of pupils achieve well.
- The early years setting provides a good nurturing environment that enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning, and particularly in their personal development.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching is good. They check carefully on its quality and how well pupils are doing. They have a good awareness of how the teaching can improve and develop further.
- The proprietor has a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school by holding leaders appropriately to account for these.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Key Stage 1 teachers do not always adjust tasks so that the work is difficult enough for the most able pupils. Consequently, a few do not achieve as much as they could.
- Early years children do not have such rich experiences to learn in the outside learning environment as they do in the classroom.
- Teachers' marking does not always lead to prompt improvements in pupils' work. They have few opportunities to share best practice so that they can improve their teaching and other aspects of their work further.
- The system for managing the performance of teachers is not yet fully developed, although they are held to account for pupils' progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was given a day's notice of this inspection.
- The inspector observed learning in all year groups, and an assembly. One observation was conducted jointly with the school co-ordinator.
- The inspector held discussions with senior leaders, including those with responsibility for the governance and management of the Al-Khair group of schools, and the member of staff responsible for the safeguarding of pupils.
- Examples of written work were examined and an interview was held with a group of pupils. The inspector heard pupils read. Observations were made of behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Meetings were held with members of the teaching staff. School documentation, including the teaching, curriculum, welfare and safety policies, was scrutinised, along with behaviour records and assessment information.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for responses to be examined, however a meeting was held with group of parents to ascertain their views. All staff took the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about the school and their views were taken into account.

Inspection team

Richard Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Al-Khair Primary School was founded in 2013 and was registered on 4 June 2014. It is an independent Muslim day school, located in a residential area of Oldbury, in the West Midlands. It provides a full-time education for 14 boys and girls.
- There are three mixed-age classes with pupils from Reception to Year 5. There are no Year 6 pupils.
- The premises include classroom areas, a specialist teaching area for computing, prayer facilities and an outside play area.
- The school is one of three schools of the Al-Khair Foundation; this is an educational charity which also operates a primary and a secondary independent school in Croydon, London. The founder, Imam Qasim Ahmad, is also the proprietor of the school. The head of the London primary school is acting as the temporary headteacher for this school. The daily management of the school is delegated to a school co-ordinator.
- The school's aim is to provide 'a cultivating, caring and secure environment producing well-balanced, confident and articulate pupils, with a good understanding of their Islamic heritage, through the provision of an excellent education.'
- There are three children in the early years, all of Reception class age, and they attend full time. None receives government funding.
- No pupils have disabilities or special educational needs.
- All pupils come from Pakistani or Indian ethnic and cultural backgrounds. None speaks English as an additional language.
- This is the school's first standard inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement to outstanding by:
 - ensuring feedback to pupils, including marking, makes clear how they can improve their work further and that teachers check that pupils put this into practice
 - providing further opportunities for all teachers to share best practice
 - making consistent provision for the learning needs of the most able pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Improve leadership and management by developing further the system for the management of teachers' performance and formalise the links between this and pupils' achievement and training.
- Ensure the best use is made of the early years outside area to promote high quality learning opportunities and particularly, to improve the children's creative development further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders are committed to providing a high quality of education for the pupils in line with its aims. They have ensured that all regulatory requirements are met. Pupils are educated in a safe environment and there are good standards of education. Leaders are excellent role models and contribute significantly to the outstanding spiritual atmosphere within the school.
- The current leadership arrangements provide good levels of both support and oversight. The acting headteacher visits regularly, and is supported in her role by other senior members of staff within the Al-Khair group. Discussions with staff indicate that leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and that their monitoring is effective in improving standards.
- Leaders are accurate in their self-evaluation, and have a clear set of priorities to help the school develop in the future. Many of the areas for improvement for this inspection, such as further developing the performance management system, have already been recognised and steps taken to address them.
- Arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching have been too informal until very recently. There is a system in place to observe teachers and review their performance. However, the outcomes were not formally recorded or linked to robust target setting and opportunities for training. Teachers have too little opportunity to learn from observing others' high-quality teaching.
- The school has made good progress in meeting the areas for improvement highlighted during its initial registration visit. A new assessment system has been introduced. There is good awareness of health and safety within the school and any deficiencies are promptly addressed, for example in the provision of new toilet facilities. The use of the early years outdoor area, however, has not yet been developed fully.
- The curriculum is good. It broadly follows the National Curriculum, and gives priority to developing pupils' numeracy and literacy skills. In line with the school's ethos, there is significant emphasis on religious education and Islamic culture, including the Arabic language. Pupils also have many opportunities, however, to learn about life in modern Britain, and its laws and values, as well as developing an understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- This is a small school with no middle leaders. However, the onsite senior leaders, including early years leaders carry out the role of subject leadership effectively with good support from the Foundation's leaders and specialists.
- Parents are highly satisfied with the ethos of the school and the standards of behaviour and education provided. The school has good systems in place for working with families and other agencies to safeguard the well being of pupils as well as to provide for their learning. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet requirements.
- The Foundation provides good support for the school, including the sharing of planning, resources and training and access to subject specialists and leaders from other more established schools within the group.
- **The governance of the school:**

Effective governance results in all independent school standards being met. The proprietor is highly committed to the development of the school, has provided much tangible support during its establishment and continues to do so. This includes checking that the vision for all schools within the group is reflected in their ethos.

The proprietor has a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development and current issues. He knows how well pupils are doing and takes account of the assessment data the school has in determining school effectiveness. The acting headteacher regularly visits and reports back. As a result, the proprietor monitors the quality of teaching and of education provided.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They play together across all age groups and interact notably well with each other. Pupils show a strong mutual respect for each other and towards adults.
- In lessons, pupils are conscientious and work cooperatively with each other. However, a few are reluctant to show initiative or take a lead in their own learning, waiting to be told what to do, rather than asking questions or seeking new challenges to extend their learning and improve understanding.
- Pupils' respect for each other and adults is highly developed. They respond promptly to instructions. They understand and follow the school rules. Instances of poor behaviour are very rare, and no serious sanctions have been required.
- Attendance is high, and the school has robust measures in place to follow up on absences. Pupils are known very well as individuals, enabling the provision of highly effective pastoral support. Every pupil's individuality is valued and celebrated.
- Through their daily prayers, and their respect for all faiths, pupils show that spirituality is central to their lives. Their high standards of behaviour and strong social skills allow them to express their faith in a practical sense, through excellent relationship and care for one another. They have a very good knowledge of British values, and visit places of worship linked to other faiths, such as a local church.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. The school has all the required health and safety policies and detailed records are kept to ensure all safety equipment is correctly maintained. In addition, procedures to guard against the risks of fire are followed with care.
- Appropriate risk assessments are made and followed for all activities, both on and away from the school site. Safety awareness is good, and the school takes prompt action to address potential issues that are identified. The school site is secure.
- Safeguarding arrangements, including procedures for the recruitment of staff, follow current guidance and are implemented well.
- The site provides suitable accommodation for the registered number of pupils. The outdoor learning environment for the early years children provides a safe but rather barren environment. Although there are adequate resources for children to learn outside, they have too infrequent opportunities to do so.
- There is no evidence of any bullying, and pupils and parents confirm this. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, and are confident that staff would address any issues promptly. Pupils are protected well from extremist views, because of the ways in which pupils are supported to understand different life styles and the checks that the school makes on staff and visitors.
- Pupils show a good knowledge of internet safety, how to respond to strangers and the potential dangers from road traffic, fire and water.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and is reflected in the good levels of achievement of pupils of all ages and abilities. Teachers have strong relationships with their pupils, and expect them to apply themselves to the best of their ability.
- Reading skills are mostly well taught. This results in pupils' love of reading and accuracy in their skills. Occasionally, harder texts for a few of the more able pupils are used to a more limited extent. There is a strong emphasis on the use of correct grammar. Pupils have many opportunities to write at length in the

different subjects they study. Staff guide them well so that they learn to extend their writing and construct well formed and complex sentences by the time they are in Year 5. There is a good emphasis on how pupils solve problems in mathematics. Challenging work in algebra and in interpreting data helps pupils learn about patterns and relationships in number and leads to conclusions which are accurate.

- Teachers use the information from the new assessment system to plan work that is generally well tailored to pupils' needs and engages their interest. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and are deployed effectively so that best use is made of their subject specialisms, such as modern foreign languages. This ensures the teaching is expert and that pupils make good progress.
- The small class sizes allow for numerous opportunities to provide for individual support for pupils, so that areas of uncertainty are clarified and misconceptions addressed. Careful use of probing questions deepens pupils' understanding further.
- Although there are no pupils that currently require support who are disabled or who have special educational needs, there is appropriate expertise amongst the staff to address these. In addition, there is significant experience in the provision of support for pupils for whom English is an additional language, if this becomes necessary.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunities provided for them to find things out by themselves or work with each other. These are often linked to the use of computers for research and to present their findings. They demonstrate good skills in the use of information technology for such tasks and strong keyboard and other skills as they do so.
- Homework is set regularly and this helps to extend pupils' learning as well as preparing them effectively for their senior school. In addition, significant support is provided to help pupils to prepare for entrance examinations to selective schools.
- Teachers promote pupils' understanding of diversity and British values well through the strong support given for citizenship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. In a topic on the general election, speakers were invited to represent differing political viewpoints, and the relative merits of these were discussed objectively. Pupils showed a mature grasp of such issues.
- Good use is made of educational visits to enhance the pupils' learning and knowledge of British life and culture. These have included trips to scientific and technology centres, and local historical sites.
- All books are marked regularly. In many examples, areas for improvement are highlighted and targets for improvement are used to enhance future learning. This helps pupils make prompt improvements. In a small number of cases, teachers' marking is less effective because guidance is minimal and does not explain enough what pupils are expected to do.
- Occasionally, in Key Stage 1 activities do not provide enough challenge to meet the needs of more able pupils and they complete work that is too easy. This slows their progress so that a few do not achieve the highest levels that they could do.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The achievement of pupils is good because of effective teaching and the good attitudes and conscientious approach to learning shown by all pupils.
- Pupils enter Year 1 with skills and abilities typical for their age and sometimes better. In phonics (the sounds letters make), they build on the good grounding they have received in the early years and this helps them make good progress in reading and writing. National Curriculum assessment data shows that almost all Year 2 pupils meet the national age-related expectations, and a few exceed them. By the time they reach Year 5 they are working ahead of their expected levels in reading and writing.
- Pupils make similarly good progress in mathematics. Older pupils think hard about mathematical problems, finding solutions to practical problems. They have good computing skills, and communicate

their mathematical ideas and findings well. They can explain how they have worked something out and present their working out well neatly in their mathematics books.

- Presentation of written work is generally good, and pupil's handwriting is well-developed for their age due to the high priority given to this skill by the school. Older pupils can write effectively for a wide variety of purposes, in advance of the expectations for their age, showing the accurate use of grammar and spelling.
- Reading standards are good, and pupils show a positive approach towards developing their skills. The level and variety of reading texts is generally well suited to the needs of individuals. Occasionally, there is insufficient challenge or opportunities for the more able readers to progress.
- Although both attainment and progress are generally above average across the school, very few of the more able pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve their full potential. The school has already identified this, and has recently taken steps to address this situation through the provision of intervention groups.

The early years provision

is good

- The leadership of the early years is good. Children's learning and development are checked on carefully and leaders have a clear vision as to how the provision can be improved further.
- Children settle in quickly and behave well because staff support them very effectively. Relationships with adults and between the children themselves are excellent, so that so that children feel secure and show growing confidence. Children are kept very safe. They have regular opportunities to interact with the older pupils. This all contributes to their good and often better progress in their personal and social development.
- Learning is good in all areas with particular strengths in the development of the children's writing, numeracy and their social skills.
- Children enter the Reception setting at various points during the year, and their starting points vary considerably. By the end of the year most have achieved levels of development that are at least typical and sometimes better than others of their age. All have made good progress from their starting points. Most have a secure understanding of number bonds to 20, are developing a good understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) and can write simple sentences accurately, applying these phonic skills well. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children make good progress because teachers know their needs very well and plan activities that are well designed to meet these and to engage their interest. Staff have a very good understanding of how to make links between children's learning, skilfully drawing on children's phonics work, for example, to develop writing skills. Teachers make good quality regular assessments to record progress and to inform next steps and future learning opportunities.
- Although the indoor learning environment is rich and excites children's curiosity, limited use is made of the outdoor area at present. This means learning is not as varied and rich as it could be and particularly in respect of children's creative development.
- The setting has established strong links with parents. Those interviewed stated that they receive regular feedback about their children, and any areas of concern are promptly addressed. Inspector scrutiny and observations confirms that the information provided for parents is of good quality.

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 GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	141001
Inspection number	462980
DfE registration number	999/1556

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Day
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Proprietor	Qasim Ahmad
Headteacher	Almas Iqbal
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2925
Telephone number	0121 5442361
Email address	waqar.latif@alkhairschool.org.uk

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