

Al-Khair School

109–117 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon CR0 6BE

29 September–1 October
2015

Inspection dates

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for children and learners	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good (Bridge School Inspectorate)

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have ensured that the school complies with all the independent school standards. The quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve.
- Both headteachers, and the staff, are passionate about ensuring all pupils are equipped to make aspirational choices about their adult lives when they leave the school. They effectively model the values they believe in, and any inequalities or prejudice are not tolerated.
- Leaders have an exciting vision for the future of the school. They monitor the quality of teaching and the impact this has on individuals' outcomes very closely. As a result, nearly all pupils make good progress and achieve results that compare very well with other schools.
- The curriculum is innovative and carefully designed. It allows pupils to learn about the Islamic faith while also studying a wide range of subjects and participating in enrichment courses.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers are well qualified in their subjects. They support and challenge pupils to reach aspirational targets and will not accept work that is not of the highest standard.
- The early years provision is good. Children in Reception are taught well and enjoy coming to school. They know how to concentrate, listen carefully and work with each other. They start Year 1 ready to learn.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils is outstanding, as is their behaviour. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning, value the support they receive and work hard to achieve the high expectations their teachers have of them.
- Older pupils take on leadership roles and are influential role models for their younger peers. All pupils demonstrate exemplary manners and consideration towards others from the earliest age.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- School systems for the monitoring of assessment information, recruitment and health and safety checks are not firmly embedded. This reduces the capacity of leaders to identify when further actions are needed.
- The current buildings and premises are barely adequate. The limitations of the accommodation at both sites sometimes constrain the quality of teaching and learning activities.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement consistent systems across both primary and secondary schools for gathering, recording and reviewing information, so that leaders can quickly identify when further actions are needed, with particular regard to:
 - the regular review of policies and procedures
 - the monitoring of assessment information for different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that statutory health and safety checks are appropriately logged
 - ensuring that all recruitment checks are systematically recorded.

- Improve the premises so that all teaching and learning activities can take place in accommodation that is fit for purpose and allows pupils to make outstanding progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The proprietor and headteachers of the primary and secondary schools share an aspirational vision for the school to become an outstanding provider of education, underpinned by the values of Islam. They are working closely with other independent and maintained schools and teacher education providers to ensure that Al-Khair School continues to improve.
- The two headteachers have formed a supportive and productive alliance that is driving the school forward. They are uncompromising in their efforts to improve teaching and learning standards across the school. They are held in high regard by their staff, many of whom are appreciative of the high levels of personal support they are offered. Pupil admissions to both the primary and secondary schools have risen year-on-year and reflect the positive views of parents.
- The curriculum offer for pupils at both the primary and secondary schools is rich and diverse, and equality of opportunity is promoted throughout the school. The school's stated aim of 'balance without compromise' is reflected in the way the Islamic studies and national curriculum are interwoven to allow both to constantly reinforce and complement each other. Secondary pupils also take part in a wide range of timetabled enrichment activities. These include opportunities to scuba dive, participate in accredited public speaking awards and join the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
- The quality of the social, moral, spiritual and cultural curriculum is a strength of the school. While Islamic values form the core of the school, this is not at the cost of other faiths, cultures and fundamental British values. Pupils learn about the principles of law and order and democracy, and are taught to be tolerant and appreciative of different views and beliefs. Leaders have effective systems in place for ensuring that extremist or partisan views are not tolerated. This has included providing Prevent training for staff and parents so that they know how to identify and report any concerns they may have.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The headteachers regularly monitor the quality of teaching. They keep a close eye on assessment information to check that individuals are reaching the aspirational targets they have been set. They regularly review teachers' planning and schemes of work, and provide helpful feedback as appropriate. Middle leaders have been appointed as the school has grown and now assist with this monitoring. Leaders do not monitor the performance of different pupil groups because tracking systems for doing this are not in place.
- Staff receive regular performance management and are set targets linked to pupils' performance. They are encouraged to participate in a wide range of professional development opportunities and to share good practice with their colleagues. National College for Teaching and Leadership courses are offered to new middle leaders. Together with peer mentoring and coaching opportunities, this has improved the quality of teaching across the school.
- Outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare standards have been achieved because leaders model the highest standards of learning and personal behaviours they wish staff and pupils to adopt. For example, the two headteachers are currently training to become Duke of Edinburgh assessors to encourage more girls to take part in the scheme.
- Leaders have taken effective action to meet all the independent school standards that were not met at the time of the last inspection. Improvements have been made to the secondary school building, including general redecoration and the addition of new shower facilities and a disabled toilet. Arrangements for how pupils use the limited outdoor space have been improved. An enhanced curriculum now allows an appropriate breadth of subjects to be studied across all key stages. While all regulations are met, the limitations of the accommodation at both the primary and secondary sites remain a concern. The secondary building has limited space for practical and creative work or outdoor sports and recreational activities. At the primary school, children in the Reception classes have reduced access to the outdoor learning areas because their classrooms are on the first floor. Leaders are currently considering options that will allow the school to move to a site that offers more space and better quality facilities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school's founding proprietor remains actively involved and provides support and challenge to school leaders. He has recognised that the school requires additional support as it has continued to grow and his responsibilities as the founder and Chairman of the Al-Khair Foundation have expanded. The school currently draws on the support of the trustees of the Al-Khair Foundation for financial, personnel and site management.
 - A Rapid Action Committee (RAC) has been created, which is formed with a number of parents and professionals who are actively supporting the school. They meet regularly and have drawn up an

action plan and timeline for further improvements. Together with the proprietor and headteachers, they will determine how a formally constituted governing body will be formed, possibly by the end of this academic year.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all the required checks are made on staff when they start work at the school. Staff have attended appropriate training and named officers for child protection, first aid and fire evacuations are appointed. Arrangements for recording attendance and the destinations of children who leave the school are appropriately managed.
- Policies take account of the latest guidance issued by the regulatory bodies. Both sites are maintained to an adequate standard and all welfare, health and safety regulations are met. However, the current systems for reviewing policies and checking that recruitment and health and safety checks have been made are not efficient. Leaders are therefore unable to monitor them systematically to identify when additional actions are needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan engaging activities that keep pupils interested in their learning. They know their pupils well and have an accurate understanding of what level pupils are working at. Most teachers quickly identify when pupils need additional support and ensure that this is provided. Nearly all pupils make good progress towards the challenging targets teachers set.
- Each pupil's progress is closely monitored and teachers provide regular and helpful advice to pupils about how to improve. Effective mentoring, one-to-one coaching sessions and the guided support of parents ensure that very few pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive and pupils are helped to develop outstanding attitudes towards their learning. Pupils take care in how they present their work and recognise that any shoddy or careless work will be challenged. They understand that this is because their teachers want them to achieve well and will not accept less than the pupils' best.
- Teachers continually reinforce the development of good literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are given opportunities to practise these skills in all subjects and classes, and are encouraged to apply them in different contexts. For example, pupils are required to read aloud, write in full sentences and use appropriate punctuation in all subjects, not just in English lessons. Many pupils are confident readers of both English and Arabic texts by the time they leave the primary school.
- Communication skills are actively promoted in every lesson. Teachers use effective questioning skills to check understanding and identify any misconceptions. Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and ask questions when they do not understand. Pupils at the secondary school participate in public speaking activities and many are highly effective communicators.
- Teaching is not outstanding because not all teachers assess how much progress pupils are making closely enough. This means that they do not move pupils on in their learning as quickly as they could and progress slows.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is outstanding**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride, and consider themselves privileged to attend the school. They give time and effort to generate funds for those who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils lead charity events throughout the year that benefit a wide range of British and overseas organisations and causes.
- An extensive programme of personal, social and health education is delivered through the pastoral system and also through Islamic and religious studies lessons. Pupils are knowledgeable about online safety and understand how to keep themselves safe from bullying or extremist behaviours.
- Older pupils are reflective about the values of their faith and consider that, while boys and girls are taught separately at the secondary school, they are offered the same opportunities and treated as equals. Both boys and girls feel that the school prepares them well for the choices they will make about their futures when they leave the school. Inspectors agree with this view.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. From the youngest children in Reception to the young adults in Year 11, pupils apply themselves to their learning and demonstrate high levels of engagement and respect for each other and their surroundings.
- Exemplary standards of courtesy, consideration and care for each other are evident throughout the school. Older prefects support those who are younger or new to the school; they are held in high esteem and act as effective role models.
- Pupils are punctual and attend very regularly. Any non-attendance is followed up immediately.
- The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently throughout both primary and secondary schools. Pupils are clear about the expectations that teachers have and any disruption to learning is very rare. When serious sanctions, such as suspensions, are necessary, they are applied in line with the school's policy and recorded appropriately. Behaviour logs demonstrate that such incidents are uncommon.

Outcomes for children and learners are good

- Children in the early years make good progress. The proportions of children starting Year 1 having achieved a good level of development are above average.
- Pupils continue to make at least good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and 2, with a significant proportion making better than expected progress in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve equally well in all subjects and many pass entrance examinations to the school of their choice at the end of Year 6.
- All pupils sit an entrance examination before joining the secondary school in Year 7 and their progress is tracked carefully from this starting point. Individual tracking information shows that they are set ambitious targets for all subjects in line with national benchmarks and make at least good progress towards them. Targets are monitored and reviewed every term. Any underperformance is quickly identified and pupils placed on individual support programmes to help them catch up.
- By the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils achieve at least five GCSE examination passes at grades A* to C, including in English and mathematics. The proportion of Year 11 pupils who achieved the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) last year was well above average.
- The most-able pupils benefit from individual learning programmes that encourage high levels of personal enquiry to stretch their understanding even further. This allows them to attain the highest examination grades at the end of Year 11 and represents good progress from their individual starting points in Year 7.
- Current tracking systems for recording progress information do not allow a comparison to be made across different groups, cohorts or subjects. However, observations made in lessons, together with the quality of work seen in pupils' books, indicate that pupils perform equally well in all National Curriculum subjects and in Islamic, Arabic and Quran studies.
- When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 11, nearly all proceed to study higher-level courses at a wide range of sixth forms or further education colleges. They are prepared well by the school to help them choose the best course and provider.
- A comprehensive careers programme includes visits to careers fairs and opportunities to hear visiting speakers. The two headteachers are passionately committed to ensuring that every pupil is encouraged to be the best that they can be. For example, they have recognised that some girls from an Islamic background may not have traditionally aspired to become leaders or pursue professional careers. They have therefore devised a curriculum that includes regular careers advice and guidance from the earliest stages of primary school to help them make informed choices about their futures.

Early years provision is good

- Leaders have ensured that all independent school standards in relation to the provision are met and have also taken account of the requirements of the statutory framework for the early years.
- Adults have high expectations of children and support their learning and welfare needs well. Creative and imaginative activities help them to become confident and enthusiastic learners. Consequently, children make good progress in all the areas of learning.
- Parents value the regular contact with teachers, which helps them to support their children at home. They receive regular emails that let them know what progress their child has made and what they need to do next.

- Children in the early years provision benefit from a curriculum that is broad and interesting. There is a strong focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills as early as possible.
- Teachers support children to develop good social skills that help them to behave very well. This ensures that they start Year 1 ready to learn.
- While Reception classrooms are bright and well resourced, learning is sometimes restricted by the lack of space and limited access to the outdoor play areas on the ground floor. Teachers seek to address this by providing regular trips and visits to a local park to allow children to experience the wider world.
- A newly appointed leader of the provision has quickly drawn up an action plan based on a review of the current provision. This includes the introduction of a new assessment system and further training for staff on identifying the next steps in children's learning. Leaders have recognised that, while the current assessment system records the progress that individual children make, it does not allow them to monitor how well different groups perform across all the areas of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	134585
Inspection number	10007698
DfE registration number	306/6096
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	Primary and Secondary
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–16 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	430
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Iman Qasim Rashid Ahmad
Secondary school headteacher	Mrs Aisha Chaudhry
Primary school headteacher	Ms Almas Iqbal
Annual fees (day pupils)	Primary £4,450 Secondary £4,900
Telephone number	020 8662 8664
Website	www.alkhairschool.org.uk
Email address	admin@alkhairschool.org.uk
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2014 (Bridge School Inspectorate)

Information about this school

- Al-Khair School is a primary and secondary independent day school with an Islamic ethos. The buildings are owned by the Al-Khair Foundation. There is a sole proprietor of the school and no governing body.
- The school aims state: 'Al-Khair School is committed to the pursuit of academic excellence and Islamic development for all pupils in our care. The school promotes an ethos which seeks to cultivate and nurture each pupil with a love for Islam and a respect for all, regardless of race, religion or nationality.'
- Most pupils commute to the school from a number of surrounding south London boroughs. Nearly all are from Muslim families.
- Nearly all pupils at the school are fluent in English. There are no pupils at the school who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. There are currently no children who are looked after by the local authority or who are disadvantaged and thus eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- Primary school pupils are taught at a different site, a few miles from the secondary school.
- Boys and girls are taught in mixed classes at the primary school. Boys and girls are taught in single-sex classes at the secondary school.
- Pupils are selected for entry to the secondary school. They sit an examination and attend an interview before a place is offered.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate in February 2014. This is the first inspection carried out by Ofsted since 2011.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning activities across all key stages at both sites. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteachers of the primary and secondary schools.
- Discussions were held with three groups of pupils and informally with others throughout the inspection. Meetings were held with both headteachers and groups of leaders and teachers from the primary and secondary schools. Inspectors also met with the proprietor.
- Inspectors checked compliance with the independent school regulations. Documentation relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety and curriculum planning were examined. Teachers' assessments and pupils' work were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the responses from 30 questionnaires completed by staff. There were no parental responses from Ofsted's online Parent View survey but inspectors spoke to a number of parents and considered the school's own survey of parental views.

Inspection team

Lesley Cox, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Angela Corbett	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joanna Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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