

Al-Markaz Academy

Sm Complex,
Beckside Lane off Beckside Road,
Bradford,
West Yorkshire
BD7 2JX

Inspection dates

10–12 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Lower-attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress from their starting points. They are not supported appropriately by adults to help them learn well. Activities are not planned to fully match their abilities.
- Not enough teachers are skilled at questioning pupils to support their learning.
- Teachers often support pupils too much and intervene with answers and suggestions too quickly, which discourages pupils from thinking for themselves.
- The standard of spelling is poor in all subjects.
- Leaders and managers do not carefully evaluate the quality of teaching and some other aspects of the school's work in a systematic enough way to secure school improvement.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that assessment is rigorous and accurate and that it is effectively used to support pupils' learning.
- Teachers are not held fully accountable for the quality of their work nor given appropriate support to help them improve their practice.
- The headteacher is not confident and clear about all aspects of her responsibilities and is not challenged enough to ensure her effectiveness by the proprietors.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour and relationships are good.
- Pupils feel safe and they enjoy coming to school.
- Daily assemblies allow pupils the opportunities to learn about and discuss local and global issues.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that pupils experience a curriculum that encompasses a range of subjects including Fiqh (Islamic studies), information and communication technology (ICT) and rhythm and movement and art.
- The majority of pupils make good progress in a range of subjects.

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?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - systematic monitoring is undertaken on all aspects of teaching and learning and pupils' welfare so that improvements can be planned and carried out
 - all teachers are held to account for the progress that pupils make and are given appropriate support to help them improve
 - the headteacher is aware of all of her responsibilities and held to account for her effectiveness
 - assessment procedures are rigorous and accurate.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - lower-attaining pupils are given activities and learning objectives that match their learning needs
 - all pupils, but particularly lower-attaining pupils, receive appropriate support in lessons to enable them to learn at a much faster pace
 - teachers improve their questioning skills
 - pupils improve their spelling in all subjects and make fewer minor errors when spelling simple words.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Although leaders and managers know their school well, they have not developed a systematic way of evaluating its strengths and weaknesses to be able to make improvements.
- Leaders and managers are aware that some assessments are not accurate. However, English assessment information is carefully moderated and judgements made from a range of information. Where assessments are not accurate, leaders and teachers have an inflated idea of how well pupils are doing in some subjects.
- The headteacher and the proprietors currently monitor the quality of teaching through regular lesson observations. They are not using this information to improve teachers' performance and make them more accountable for the standards pupils reach.
- Leaders and managers are highly motivated to improve the school. However, they have not yet considered the support and guidance that teachers need to help them improve. Nevertheless, teachers comment that they do feel well supported by the headteacher and the proprietors.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that the subjects studied give pupils the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge. This means most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education and life in Britain.
- Daily assemblies ensure that pupils get the opportunity to discuss local and global issues. A recent assembly on a local project for homeless people sparked valuable discussions and a visit from the organiser. Pupils considered how they could support the project.
- The headteacher has also organised visits from local authority officers who will help pupils gain further understanding of issues such as keeping safe whilst using the internet. A Second World War topic and a Remembrance assembly have also supported pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher is passionate about aligning Muslim values with fundamental British values and does so on a daily basis. Pupils have a clear understanding of what moral values are.
- Parents are happy with the progress their children are making and the information that they receive from the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Regular meetings are held with the headteacher, where information is shared. However, the headteacher is not fully challenged on issues that arise, such as the inaccuracy of assessment information. The headteacher has not been given a clear idea of what her roles and responsibilities are and actions for school improvement are not implemented. Proprietors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in the school but have not yet developed a systematic way of setting targets for improvement. Proprietors know their school well. The proprietors quickly addressed issues of non-compliance of the independent school standards that arose from the pre-registration visit in April 2014. Although some minor amendments were needed for some documentation, the proprietors have ensured that the independent school standards are all met effectively. They have also ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have recent training in child protection, first aid and fire safety. The required checks have been made on all staff and the single central record is compliant.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Teachers plan learning tasks for lower-attaining pupils that do not match their capabilities. This frequently means that these pupils struggle to complete tasks and very little learning takes place.
- Pupils, particularly lower-attaining pupils, are too frequently given too much guidance from adults. Adults generally sit with lower-attaining pupils throughout the lesson, predominantly in mathematics and science, and give answers before pupils have the opportunity to think for themselves. When questioned, these pupils do not understand work that has been taught previously.
- In other lessons, teachers also intervene too quickly. In a dance lesson, leadership, cooperation and creative skills were stifled as a teacher interjected too soon.
- Teachers too frequently give pupils the answer to a question too quickly or ask questions where the

answer only requires a yes or no response. This restricts pupils' ability to learn. However, this is not always the case and some teachers are skilled in questioning pupils.

- The standard of spelling is poor for all pupils across all subjects. Effective strategies have not been put in place to improve this aspect of pupils' work.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects that they teach.
- Teachers engage pupils well in lessons by stimulating their learning through a variety of activities, such as discussion, videos and design and technology. A three-dimensional display of Haj has supported pupils' understanding well.
- All work is marked and follows the school's marking scheme well. Pupils are aware of the standards they have reached and how they can improve their work. Occasionally, when pupils mark each other's work, mistakes are not always corrected rigorously, for example, when a spelling test was marked incorrectly.
- Presentation in all books, including homework, is excellent and pupils take pride in the work they complete.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are well educated about how to stay safe on the internet and are knowledgeable about issues such as grooming and radicalism. Arrangements have already been made for visitors to come to school to help pupils understand about aspects such as fire and road safety.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise.
- Religious education lessons and assemblies encourage tolerance and the recognition of differences of opinions and beliefs. These lessons give pupils time to discuss moral issues and lawfulness. Pupils speak about how they respect and celebrate differences. A discussion in assembly about a recent aeroplane disaster sparked discussions of how it is wrong to hurt others regardless of one's beliefs.
- Pupils feel safe and are comfortable speaking to adults if they need to. They know what bullying is and report that it does not occur. Parents also consider that their children are safe and happy in school.
- All pupils say that although they were nervous when they started the school six weeks ago they quickly settled in and have made good friends.
- Pupils take a pride in their appearance, the school and in the work they produce.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Relationships are good. Pupils work and play well together.
- Pupils are well supervised at all times and conduct themselves well regardless of the level of adult supervision.
- Pupils are eager to learn and are always ready to start learning at the beginning of every lesson.
- A very clear system for behaviour rewards and sanctions is in place and works effectively. Expectations of behaviour are high. Very occasionally pupils behave less well when they are not taught as well as they might be.
- Attendance overall is good.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Despite most pupils making good progress across a wide range of their work, outcomes require improvement because of pupils' poor spelling and the relevant underachievement of the lower-attaining pupils.
- Lower-attaining pupils have made little progress across most subjects since starting at the school in September. For example, in science, these pupils had no understanding of the subject being studied. Work was completed with little or no understanding.
- The standards pupils reach in spelling is poor across all subjects. Spelling does not currently show signs

of improvement in books.

- The majority of pupils have completed a wide range of work in the vast majority of subjects. Books show that they are working at a level that is appropriate or above that expected for their age. The work also demonstrates that most pupils have made good progress in many subjects in the six weeks they have been attending the school. Pupils confidently explain mathematics problems posed to them and recall accurately work that they studied a few weeks ago.
- Leaders and managers acknowledge that baseline assessment and half-termly assessments in some subjects do not show an accurate picture of progress made. In mathematics, assessment information shows pupils as having made exceptional progress. However, work in books and in lessons shows evidence of good progress.
- In English, all information demonstrates that most pupils have made good progress in reading and writing, if not spelling, since starting at the school. Assessment information is based on a range of evidence. It is well moderated and gives a more accurate picture of pupils' attainment. This is verified with evidence from pupils' work in books.
- Pupils read regularly. Sometimes, teachers read texts out to the class and deny pupils opportunities to read. Pupils are in the process of registering with the local library so that they have a wider range of texts from which to choose.
- Pupils follow a recognised commercial scheme for their weekly Fiqh (Islamic faith) lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of Islam and are making good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	141316
Inspection number	10006031
DfE registration number	380/6010
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	Independent Muslim girls secondary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–12 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Zaroon Hussain and Asam Hussain
Headteacher	Mrs R Hassan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1750
Telephone number	01274 270043
Website	www.almarkazacademy.co.uk
Email address	almarka@outlook.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Al-Markaz Academy is an independent Muslim school for girls between the ages of 11 and 12 years. The school welcome pack states that 'although Al-Markaz promotes an Islamic ethos it openly welcomes and admits pupils from all backgrounds regardless of their race, religion and ethnicity'.
- The school uses part of a large former warehouse. After the school day has ended and pupils have left the premises, the building operates as a Madrassah. Otherwise pupils and staff have sole use of the building. This arrangement restricts any extra-curricular activities from taking place at the end of the school day.
- This is the school's first full inspection since being registered in April 2014. Pupils started attending the school in September 2015.
- The school aims include: 'to promote Islamic morals, help pupils fulfil their academic potential in all subjects and to develop responsible citizens who can make a positive contribution to society'.
- There are no disabled pupils on roll, or pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or any who are at the early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days.
- The inspection toured the parts of the building used by the school, both inside and outside.
- The inspector observed learning in a number of lessons in a range of subjects. She also studied the work in books across all subjects of all pupils.
- The inspector spoke to pupils on several occasions throughout the inspection. She also spoke to parents and staff and took their responses into account. There was one response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The inspector held regular meetings with the headteacher throughout the inspection and also met with one of the proprietors.
- The inspector examined school documentation, such as admission and attendance registers, and a number of policies, including those for behaviour, safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and all documents required as part of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

