

Al-Furqaan Preparatory School

Drill Hall House, Bath Street, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF13 2JR

Inspection dates

19–21 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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| 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 |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Governors and leaders have not made sure that teaching enables all pupils to learn and make progress as well as they could.
- Teachers do not use all the information available about pupils' progress to plan learning with enough precision. As a result, some pupils do not make consistently good progress in all subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The proprietor and school leaders ensure that all the independent school standards and associated requirements are met.
- Leaders know the school's strengths and address any weaknesses they identify.
- Leaders' work to promote the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils is good. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and thrive.
- Most pupils make good progress across different year groups and across a range of subjects.
- Pupils behave well and are respectful of each other and adults. They attend well and almost always participate positively in their learning.
- Governors and school leaders have a clearly articulated vision and ambition to provide a safe, secure learning environment where pupils can learn well. This motivates staff and pupils alike. As a consequence, the school is improving.
- The school's curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It prepares them well for their next stage of education and for life in modern Britain.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Staff use information about pupils adeptly to plan their learning with precision. Pupils make consistently good progress in their learning and personal development.

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?

- Leaders should improve the use of information from monitoring and evaluation by ensuring that:
 - it leads directly to improvements in the quality of teachers' planning for pupils' learning taking rigorously into account the learning needs of all pupils
 - all teachers and classroom staff know how best to challenge pupils of all abilities
 - all teachers develop further the skills needed to plan activities that grip all pupils' attention and fire their imaginations.
- Teachers should work closely with middle leaders, who have responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and learning and assessment, to develop their practice, so that all planned learning is challenging across subjects for all their pupils by:
 - sharpening their questioning skills to check pupils' understanding
 - moving pupils on more quickly when they are ready to deepen their understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not used all the information from monitoring and evaluation activities to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment well enough. As a result, a small number of pupils across the different year groups do not make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Many pupils make consistently good progress because leaders and governors have a well-articulated vision for the school to nurture and develop pupils' personal development, and to provide a wide and rich range of learning experiences. Leaders and governors lead by example, and, as a consequence, staff are highly motivated and committed to their pupils. This shared endeavour leads to pupils' good behaviour and supports pupils' progress.
- Governors and leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. While improvement is still required to secure consistently good progress for a small number of pupils across all years, leaders have improved outcomes for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These are now good. Leaders have also planned actions to improve further pupils' achievement in writing and mental mathematics. Their checks on pupils' progress show that these actions are paying dividends.
- Leaders arrange wide-ranging opportunities for the professional development of their staff. Staff value this because, for example, they say training helps them to keep pupils safe. They say that training improves their understanding of pupils' learning needs and, as a result, their classroom practice. Leaders provide opportunities for personalised professional development, having identified needs through monitoring teaching and its impact on improving pupils' learning.
- The headteacher and middle leaders carefully review the school's curriculum. As a consequence, pupils benefit from a well-thought-through and coherent curriculum that builds progression in learning over time. The range of learning opportunities within the taught curriculum, including visiting speakers and educational visits out of school, is wide-ranging and rich. It broadens pupils' understanding of their society. Leaders are careful to ensure that such events contribute to both pupils' academic learning and their personal development.
- The planned curriculum programmes for citizenship and personal, health and social education (PHSE) and religious studies ensure that all pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Leaders' planning for this part of the curriculum provides pupils with good opportunities to learn and understand how society works. Pupils learn about public services, how laws are made and the role of government and local councils. Even the youngest pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage have opportunities to vote for which equipment items they would most like.
- Leaders also make sure that pupils understand about school rules, that bullying is absolutely not acceptable and that respect for others, whatever pupils' backgrounds or beliefs, is central to the work of the school. Pupils have a very well-developed sense of right and wrong. Such work reflects the proprietor's and headteacher's determination to promote fundamental British values, and to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. It underpins the school's ambitions for its pupils and its refusal to countenance any inequalities. As a result, pupils show that they are open and respectful of others.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. All pupils have good opportunities to develop skills and understanding across the full range of required aspects including scientific, physical and artistic learning.
- Leaders keep a sharp eye on the safety of the school building and site. The site is secure and tidy and well maintained. All the required checks are carried out assiduously. For example, fire safety equipment meets the required standards and is checked regularly. Pupils practise evacuation drills. The corridors, classrooms and cloakrooms are well maintained and tidy. This presents a good example to pupils, who show respect for their environment. It helps to keep them safe. Teachers not only make careful risk assessments for activities such as visits out of school but also help pupils to understand for themselves the risks they might face, such as crossing roads.
- The proprietor and school leaders are absolutely determined to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure. They make sure that they are appropriately trained and that all members of staff know how to recognise any signs of neglect or abuse and what to do if they have a concern about a child. Staff demonstrate a deep understanding of the risks to pupils. This helps them to develop pupils' understanding of risks and what they have to do to be safe, for example when using the internet.
- The proprietor and headteacher are fully aware of the Prevent duty, advice recently introduced by the government, for all schools, to help keep children and young people safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Leaders worked closely with local authority officers and the police to provide them and all the staff with training to help them keep pupils safe in this respect. Leaders also

arranged for pupils to receive similar training appropriate to their ages.

- The curriculum, training and checks made on staff, to ensure that only suitable adults work with children, have developed successfully a culture in the school that supports pupils and keeps them safe.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are highly effective in communicating their vision and ethos for the school to provide a safe learning environment in the context of their Islamic beliefs. They seek to offer a rich range of learning opportunities that prepare pupils well for the next steps in their education and life in modern Britain. This sets a clear strategic direction for school leaders and staff, who reflect this ambition in their day-to-day work. The positive ethos created by the proprietor and headteacher is infectious and resonates throughout the day-to-day activities of adults and pupils alike.
 - Governors' challenge to leaders to improve outcomes for pupils has led to improvements in the curriculum, better outcomes in the early years and improving achievement in pupils' writing. However, it has not secured consistently good progress for all pupils. A small number of children do not do as well as they could.
 - Governors check for themselves how well pupils are doing by visiting classrooms and looking through pupils' books. This enables them to consider the information provided to them by school leaders with greater insight. Nevertheless, governors do not make all the use they could of this practice to challenge leaders to achieve the very best outcomes for all pupils.
 - The proprietor takes responsibility for appraising the work of the headteacher and ensures that school leaders carry out thoroughly the arrangements for staff appraisal. There is no direct link between these processes and salary progression.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teachers do not always make enough use of their good knowledge of pupils to plan learning activities with sufficient precision. As a consequence, a small number of pupils do not make consistently good progress in some of their subjects. On a very small number of occasions, pupils' interest and application to their learning wane.
- The effectiveness of teachers' questioning most often aids pupils' learning. It is most effective when it is used to deepen pupils' understanding. Occasionally, teachers do not use pupils' responses well enough to move on their learning. When they ask challenging questions, lessons come alive and the pace of learning is fast. For example, a teacher's questions in a mathematics lesson quickly checked Year 6 pupils' answers and then drew out and deepened their understanding of the mathematical concepts behind multiplying and dividing fractions.
- In line with the school's policy, teachers' written and oral feedback to pupils rightly celebrates effort and achievement. However, in some cases, teachers do not always follow the expected procedure well enough to redirect learning that will lead pupils' learning forward.
- When teachers use all available information about pupils' progress to plan learning, many pupils of all abilities, including those identified with special or additional educational needs, make good progress. For example, the work in pupils' citizenship books shows that pupils develop good levels of knowledge and understanding about institutions and the role of councillors, police officers and members of parliament.
- Reflecting a whole-school priority, teachers make deliberate use of pupils' learning targets in writing to encourage pupils to use and practise their skills in subjects such as history and citizenship. As a consequence, the great majority of pupils are on track to make expected or more than expected progress in writing.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a consequence, pupils almost always apply themselves well to their learning and this contributes to their progress. Teachers have created a positive, safe learning environment in their classrooms and this helps pupils to work well together or by themselves. Pupils show respect for each other and for all the classroom staff working with them.
- There is a clear focus on developing pupils' reading skills and engendering pupils' enjoyment of reading. Pupils show they can use the skills they have acquired in phonics lessons to read unfamiliar words. While a small number of pupils in reading out loud do not convey understanding entirely successfully, others do so with aplomb. Journals show that reading is a constant part of their day-to-day life and that, particularly in older year groups, pupils are able to write insightful responses to their books.
- Similarly, there is a keen focus on improving pupils' knowledge of their times tables. This has contributed

to pupils' speed of mental calculation. In some mathematics books, however, some pupils are not always moved on quickly enough in their learning.

- Teachers and adults in the early years setting are adept at asking questions that stimulate pupils' interests and prompt them to describe what they are doing. Following their teachers' instructions and good modelling, pupils develop personal skills quickly. Pupils learn to look after their personal needs, such as washing their hands after eating, talk about their activities and imaginative play and practise their fine motor skills through early mark-making and using the computer.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The safe environment, including the careful supervision by staff, and positive learning climate enable pupils to flourish and develop well. As result, pupils grow in self-awareness and their understanding of the world around them. Pupils are happy in school and enjoy their friendships and their learning.
- The school's safety and safeguarding arrangements keep pupils safe. Staff work with pupils, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to help them to understand risk and what they can do to keep themselves safe. The youngest pupils quickly learn to be considerate of others and take care themselves, for example when going down stairs. Older pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when they use the internet.
- The school makes sure that pupils understand how to live healthy lives. Pupils learn about different foods and have talks from a local dentist, for example. Pupils participate energetically in physical education lessons and enjoy exercise.
- During breaktime, pupils enjoy a wide variety of games or chat with friends or read quietly. Some pupils act as playground buddies to make sure no one feels left out.
- Pupils clearly understand that their behaviour affects others and show consideration and respect for their fellow pupils. A result of their lessons in personal, health and social education, citizenship and the themes covered in assembly, pupils know about bullying and that it is wrong. They recognise the harm that it can cause to others. They learn about different faith beliefs, cultures and races and understand that the respect they show for each other needs to be shown to all people.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding about bullying and right and wrong supports them in behaving very well. Pupils, while well supervised, invariably choose to behave well without prompting from teachers or other staff.
- No incidents of poor behaviour were seen throughout the inspection and very high proportions of parents and staff who responded to questionnaires agree that behaviour is as good as inspectors found. A very small number of parents do not agree.
- There have been no incidents of serious poor behaviour. Informal discussion with parents confirmed that they are as confident as their children that any concerns would be dealt with effectively by staff.
- On rare occasions, pupils' application to their learning fades when they are not sufficiently well challenged or moved on quickly enough or when they have finished a piece of work quickly.
- The high expectations of staff and that pupils have of themselves is reflected in the respect that pupils show for the school environment. Pupils from the youngest ages keep the site litter-free and tidy up after activities.
- The positive relationships seen throughout the inspection and the enjoyment shown by pupils are reflected in high levels of attendance which are well above the national average. No pupil has been excluded from school during the last school year or for some considerable time before. The rate of unauthorised absence is very low.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- While many pupils make good progress in all subjects, a small number do not make the same consistently

good progress. This is because the pace of their learning slows on occasion, particularly when the activities that teachers plan are not challenging enough.

- Overall, disabled pupils and those with special or additional educational needs make the same good progress as most others.
- From different starting points, teaching and learning opportunities enable most pupils to make good progress. The profile of progress in English and mathematics closely reflects national averages although attainment in mathematics and writing at Key Stage 2 was slightly below national averages in 2015 overall. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well above the national average. A very high proportion of pupils achieve a good level of development.
- Current rates of progress across all years in English and mathematics show that a very small proportion of pupils are not on track to make expected progress. The vast majority are on track to make expected progress or more than expected progress. The work in pupils' books confirms that this is the case. Pupils say that they work hard and are doing well.
- Occasionally, lessons do not challenge all of the most-able pupils well enough and this slows their progress. The work in their English and mathematics books show that most, but not all, are making good progress over time.
- Pupils' learning in other subjects, as seen in their books and in the school's information from checking progress, is mostly good. Pupils show they have a good grasp of key concepts in science and how their ideas can be tested fairly. In history, pupils demonstrate good knowledge of key historical events, such as the Second World War, and show an understanding of the impact that decisions made by state leaders had on people's lives. Their work shows good progression in knowledge, skills and understanding.

Early years provision

is good

- Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards and associated requirements relating to Early Years Foundation Stage provision are met. Their starting point is ensuring that safety requirements are met and that the arrangements for safeguarding do keep children safe. All the required checks, including disqualification checks, are carried out promptly and recorded carefully.
- Leaders in the Early Years Foundation Stage make sure that they manage children's learning well by engaging in continuous communication with parents about their children's learning and development. This begins by taking care to find out about each child's development on starting in the Nursery so that adults can target learning with precision.
- Staff know the pupils very well. They are skilled in making ongoing observations and assessments of children's development. As a result, they personalise learning targets for the children in all seven key areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage programme accurately. Staff talk with children all the time to prompt and develop their thinking and to elicit verbal responses to their activities. Staff are quick to spot and develop children's interests and aptitudes. For example, staff helped two children to develop their fine motor skills in operating the keyboard to use a computer program. Leaders make sure that the provision is well organised into different areas of activity. This encourages children to explore their surroundings in a safe environment.
- Shared activities, such as snack time, develop children's understanding of being healthy and their social and language skills. Children enjoy these activities and chat happily.
- Children enjoy listening to stories and staff use such experiences to develop early number knowledge and to draw out children's responses. Stories such as *The Big Bad Wolf* help children to develop an early sense of right and wrong.
- Well-planned topics, such as the current enterprise activity to purchase a new piece of equipment, are used to develop both early number work and children's first experience of voting.
- In child-led activities, children learn to make choices about their activities. They quickly learn to share and join others in activities or play by themselves. Staff do not always capitalise enough on these opportunities to continue the high-quality conversations seen during adult-led activities.
- Teaching is effective overall because teachers make good use of resources indoors and of their assessments to tailor learning well to children's interests and stage of development. As a consequence, children make good progress. The use of outdoor space is better developed for children in the Reception class than for younger children.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress in developing their early writing and reading skills. They enjoy their learning and are proud of their achievements

- Teachers' checks on children's learning have been moderated externally. This provides good levels of confidence in their accuracy and helps staff to move children on in each of the key areas of learning.
- As a consequence of well-led and effective teaching, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is well above the national average.
- Children are well prepared and ready to start new learning in Year 1.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 131131 |
| Inspection number | 10007685 |
| DfE registration number | 382/6019 |

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.

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| Type of school | Preparatory day school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 138 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 27 |
| Proprietor | Mr Yusuf Bham |
| Chair | Mr Yusuf Bham |
| Headteacher | Mr Bilal Aswat |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £780 |
| Telephone number | 01924 453661 |
| Website | www.alfurqaanschool.org (Not available at the time of inspection) |
| Email address | alfurqaanprep@yahoo.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | May 2010 |

Information about this school

- Al-Furqaan Preparatory School is a small independent day school for boys and girls between the ages of three and 11. It has a nursery with 27 places.
- It serves its local community in Dewsbury.
- The school opened in December 1996.
- While it is not registered as a school of religious character, the school ethos is Muslim.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected in May 2010.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the proprietor, headteacher and middle leaders to check that the school met the statutory requirements of the independent school standards. Discussions were held about the school's vision and ambitions and how well these were being achieved.
- Inspectors toured the school to check that the premises are safe and secure.
- A wide range of documents were examined to ensure that the school's policies met requirements and that records of pupils' progress were used to inform decisions about further learning. The school's curriculum plans were examined to see how they offered a broad and balanced range of learning to prepare pupils for their future life.
- Inspectors observed teaching in every year group to see how well teaching helped pupils to learn. They talked with pupils about their work, looked through their books and listened to some read aloud.
- Inspectors observed pupils in their social time, as well as in lessons, to see how well they behaved. Inspectors checked on pupils' attendance and any exclusions.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire used by Ofsted to gather parents' views. They also talked informally to a small number of parents and considered the parents' survey outcomes conducted by the school.
- Inspectors also talked with staff about their work and how it supports pupils' welfare and learning and took into account the views recorded in Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Campbell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Katrina Gueli

Her Majesty's Inspector

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