

Birmingham Muslim School

Bisley Works, Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham, B11 2PZ

Inspection dates

7–9 June 2016

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress pupils make from their starting points is inconsistent across the school. Consequently, pupils in key stage 2 do not make as much progress as they should, particularly in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching across the school is variable. Some teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan lessons that enthuse and motivate pupils or challenge the most able.
- Governance of the school does not pay enough attention to the achievement of different groups. Consequently, support and challenge for school leaders is not focused enough on outcomes for pupils.
- School leaders are in the early stages of developing a new recording system for monitoring pupils' progress. Current systems do not enable leaders to quickly identify patterns of underachievement, in order to take rapid action.

The school has the following strengths

- Early years provision is good. Children are well supported to develop their skills and understanding across all areas of learning.
- The headteacher has taken effective action to secure improvement since the last inspection and with other trustees has ensured that all the independent school standards are met effectively
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe and they are safe. Attendance and punctuality have improved significantly.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of modern British values. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because leaders have ensured that these aspects permeate the work of the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets all requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - taking urgent action to ensure that governance is better equipped to take a strategic role in driving school improvement that is focused on improving pupils' achievement, particularly in key stage 2, through appropriate support and challenge
 - improving systems for recording information, particularly for pupils' progress, so that it is easily accessible, enables rapid identification of patterns of underperformance and informs subsequent actions.
- Improve teaching to consistently good or better, particularly in key stage 2 mathematics, so that pupils' achievement improves, by:
 - ensuring that the detailed assessment information for individual pupils that is available in the school is used consistently and effectively to inform teachers' planning
 - further developing teachers' understanding of a range of approaches and strategies to support learning so that pupils are enthused and motivated
 - ensuring that pupils know the targets that have been set for them and understand how well they are progressing towards them.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have correctly recognised where weaknesses remain in the school and have taken appropriate steps to address these. However, in a number of areas, these have yet to take full effect. Consequently, achievement is not consistently good across the school.
- Although leaders ensure that they record all relevant information about pupils' progress meticulously, the current systems used do not enable them to quickly identify patterns of underperformance. Consequently, poorer rates of progress overall in key stage 2 have not been addressed quickly enough to ensure that pupils in Year 6 will make better progress than in previous years.
- The school's action plan identifies appropriate targets for improvement. However, these are not always measurable and occasionally focus too much on whether an action has been completed rather than the impact it has had on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders use assessment information to set appropriate targets for pupils. However, these are not shared with pupils. As a result, although pupils know if they are making progress in a subject, they do not know whether they are on track to meet their targets, and so have little sense of urgency to do so.
- This year, the headteacher has established a clear cycle for monitoring the quality of teaching which is shared with, and understood by, all staff. This, together with improved systems to judge teachers' performance, is beginning to have a positive impact on improving teaching and informing additional support that teachers may require.
- A new marking policy has been introduced this year which requires teachers to identify what pupils have done well and what they need to improve. All teachers are applying the policy and providing clear advice that is increasingly helping pupils to refine and improve their work.
- There is an effective programme of training for teachers which meets the needs of individual teachers as well as helping to meet whole-school priorities. For instance, all teachers recently attended training to improve the teaching of mathematics. This training is beginning to improve pupils' progress in this subject, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils study a range of subjects, including history, geography, art, drama, Arabic, information and communication technology and physical education, in addition to their religious studies. The curriculum is well supported through a range of visitors and visits. For example, pupils enjoyed a visit from 'ZooLab' as part of their scientific studies, through which they were introduced to exotic animals. In all subjects, teachers support pupils in developing their literacy.
- Safeguarding systems are regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are safe. All required procedures are implemented effectively and leaders ensure that any concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the school's work. Pupils are provided with a range of experiences to help them understand the cultures and beliefs of others. For instance, during one of the school's regular special focus weeks, all classes studied a religion other than their own and presented their learning about similarities and differences in an assembly. In discussions with inspectors, pupils talked convincingly about what they had learned and how they had followed up their learning through visits to different religious institutions, such as a church.
- Pupils have an impressive understanding of modern British values and speak of these as part of the values they learn every day through their religious beliefs. In this multicultural school, they demonstrate their understanding through their behaviour towards one another and in their relationships with staff.
- Leaders work hard to make sure that parents are fully involved in their children's learning. For instance, workshops have been held to help parents understand how they can support their children's reading. Parents are uniformly positive about the school. They say that communication between home and school is very good and that any problems are rapidly resolved.
- The school promotes equality effectively.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Trustees have ensured that, since the last inspection, all independent school standards have been met. They have checked that the safeguarding policy is up to date, implemented effectively and meets requirements.
 - Not all members of the board of trustees have a clear understanding of their strategic role in driving wider school improvement and raising standards. Records provide little evidence of appropriate support and challenge for the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors were not able to

secure a meeting with any trustees other than the headteacher, who is the chair of trustees. The headteacher has a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across all year groups. Although inspectors saw no evidence of inadequate teaching over time and some examples of outstanding teaching, there is too much variability in quality. School records, work in books and visits to lessons confirmed that the quality of teaching is inconsistent, particularly in key stage 2.
- Some teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan activities that provide appropriate challenge for pupils of different abilities. In these cases, all pupils were doing the same work, regardless of their starting points. Consequently, the most able pupils were not being stretched and less able pupils sometimes struggled.
- Where teaching was less successful in securing good progress, teachers had not considered the best approaches and strategies to promote learning. In these lessons, pupils were often required to do the same activity for long periods of time. As a result, although behaviour remained good, the pace of learning slowed and pupils' enthusiasm for their learning waned.
- The promotion of literacy is embedded in all subjects and year groups. All teachers take responsibility for helping pupils to apply what they know about literacy in all that they do. For instance in a Year 4 topic lesson on Ancient Egypt, pupils were expected to speak and write in clear, grammatical sentences, using punctuation appropriately.
- In nearly all teaching, inspectors noted the effective use of questioning. Teachers routinely used carefully worded questions to encourage pupils to express their ideas clearly and fluently, using standard English where appropriate, and making effective use of subject specific language.
- In the best examples, inspectors noted that teachers had planned a range of activities that required pupils to think hard, develop their ideas and responses, and apply their learning. For instance, in a mixed age class in key stage 1, pupils were learning to solve multiplication problems. Activities were matched to ability, offered challenge and secured good progress.
- In the early years, good teaching supports children to develop their independence, understanding and creativity through well thought out activities designed to meet individual needs and aptitudes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are uniformly good across the school. Even where teaching is weaker, pupils remain on task and try their best. Pupils take great pride in their work and in achieving success and are very keen to share their achievements with visitors. For example, a group of girls who are part of the school choir asked if they could sing one of the songs they had learned for inspectors. Similarly, a group of boys performed a rap song that they were very proud of composing.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, appropriate to their age. All were aware of 'stranger danger' and older pupils could explain in detail how to keep safe when online from a variety of risks.
- Pupils say there is no bullying in school and little misbehaviour. This is supported by the school's records. All pupils were confident that if bullying did happen it would be dealt with rapidly and effectively because teachers would not tolerate, 'anybody being made unhappy'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Teachers and pupils agree that behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. Inspectors saw no examples of poor behaviour during the inspection and the school's records show that only very minor incidents have occurred over the school year. This is because the behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff and is thoroughly understood by pupils. Rewards are used effectively to motivate pupils to behave well.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school at all times of the day. They treat each other and staff with respect because they have a good understanding of the value of tolerance and have been taught that differences in beliefs and cultures are part of the multicultural society in which they live.

- Attendance and punctuality have improved significantly since the last inspection as a result of action taken by the headteacher. Robust systems to address any lateness or absence are in place and have been shared with parents, who are supportive of the actions taken.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because, although there are signs that rates of progress are now improving, too many pupils in key stage 2 are not making enough progress from their starting points. This is particularly the case in mathematics. In 2015, fewer than half of the very small number of pupils entered for the Year 6 national tests achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- This year, evidence in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information indicate that outcomes in reading and writing are set to improve. However, the school's records show that this is not likely to be the case for mathematics. This is because, although improved teaching in the subject is now securing better progress, key stage 2 pupils are not yet consistently working at the standard expected for their age.
- The work in pupils' books shows that they make consistently good progress in Arabic, which is taught daily. Pupils also make good progress in humanity subjects such as history. This is because teachers plan interesting activities that are well matched to their interests and abilities.
- Rates of progress for the most able pupils are variable across key stage 2. Numbers are too small to compare to national figures, but not enough of these pupils make better progress than expected or exceed their targets set by the school.
- In key stage 1, pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics, including those who begin school with little English. This year, nearly all pupils are on track to meet age-related expectations.
- Progress for pupils who enter the school with English as an additional language is good. This is because they are well supported in lessons as well as through one-to-one tuition. The school's culture of literacy in every lesson is a key factor in their success.

Early years provision

is good

- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. Children benefit from a range of carefully planned activities that interest and engage them in their learning. Phonics is taught effectively and on a daily basis. Records show that children are making good progress in this area.
- Children take part in paired, group, individual and whole-class activities with enthusiasm and this helps them to develop the ability to work and learn in different ways and to become increasingly independent. As a result, regular and accurate assessment indicates that they make good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning and that almost all will reach a good level of development by the end of the year.
- The classroom and outdoor areas are well utilised and provide many opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, which are promoted through displays and clearly defined areas offering a range of easily accessible activities.
- High expectations of behaviour are established at the beginning of the year and children respond to these well, becoming increasingly able to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Modern British values are actively promoted. Children have British values books in which they record their learning about the rule of law, the Queen's birthday, democracy and different religions.
- The early years teacher has a good knowledge and understanding of the children, their needs and how to meet them. She has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and is well supported by senior leaders to ensure that these are regularly reviewed and improved.
- The school meets the early years safeguarding and welfare requirements and all the relevant independent schools standards. As a result, children are safe and feel secure.

School details

Unique reference number	133521
Inspection number	10007704
DfE registration number	330/6102
Type of school	Primary
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Albayan Educational Foundation Ltd
Chair	Aisha Abdrabba
Headteacher	Aisha Abdrabba
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,980
Telephone number	0121 7668129
Website	www.birminghammuslimschool.org
Email address	info@birminghammuslimschool.org
Date of previous inspection	9–11 July 2013

Information about this school

- Birmingham Muslim School is an independent selective Islamic day school for girls and boys aged 4 to 11 years old. It opened in 2001 and is part of the Albayan Educational Foundation Ltd.
- Governance of the school is through the board of trustees, which comprises of two members and the chair of trustees, who is the headteacher.
- The school aims to 'bring out the best in our children'.
- All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school has 74 pupils on roll, which is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are no pupils with special educational needs or disability.
- There are no pupils in the care of the local authority.
- A small but increasing proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- No pupils attend off-site provision.
- There are no pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority).
- The last standard inspection of the school was in July 2013, when it was judged to be adequate.
- An emergency inspection was carried out in May 2014. This was followed by a progress monitoring inspection in July 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 12 lessons or parts of lessons and made additional shorter visits to classrooms throughout the inspection.
- During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with them about their learning.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, pupils, parents and teachers.
- A tour of the school was undertaken with the headteacher.
- School documents were scrutinised, including a range of policies and information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also examined the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors observed students during lunchtimes and breaks, and on arrival and departure from school.
- Inspectors took account of seven responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and of the school's own parent view responses. Inspectors also spoke with a group of parents during the inspection.
- The school had not completed the online pupils' questionnaire, but inspectors spoke to many pupils both formally and informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of seven responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Simon Mosley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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