

Al Mu'min Primary and Secondary School

Clifton Street, Manningham, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD8 7DA

Inspection dates

17–19 January 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that the school complies with all of the independent school standards.
- The progress pupils make year on year is uneven. Progress over time is no better than average in most subjects.
- By the time pupils leave both the primary and secondary years, too many pupils, especially the most able, have not reached the standards of which they are capable.
- The unevenness in progress is because of variability in the quality of teaching across year groups and subjects. Teaching does not deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding well enough.
- Periodic testing of pupils does not take account of how they use and apply their learning from day to day. This sometimes leads to an over-optimistic view of pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan learning. Consequently, they give pupils work that is often too easy or too hard.
- Leaders' regular checks on the quality of teaching do not identify precisely enough the difference teaching makes to learning, so teaching is not improving quickly enough.
- Governance arrangements are not effective in holding leaders to account for pupils' academic achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The proprietor and leaders have maintained a strong aspirational culture. They uphold high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Children make good progress in the early years because of effective teaching and assessment.
- Adults' provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Adults keep pupils safe and pupils feel safe.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress so that it is consistently good across all year groups and all subjects by:
 - ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment information to match work to the needs of pupils of different abilities
 - improving teachers' skills so they are consistently effective across the school
 - drawing on a broad range of evidence about pupils' achievement when making assessments
 - sharpening the checks leaders make on teaching so that they more precisely identify the impact of teaching on learning
 - introducing checks and balances so that leaders are better held to account for the academic development of pupils.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Part 1: Quality of education provided. The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3(a))
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods and activities (paragraph 3(c))
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3(d))
 - demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught (paragraph 3(e))
 - uses information from assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3(g)).
- Part 8: Quality of leadership in and management of schools. The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(a))
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers do not fulfil a number of independent school standards relating to the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and recognise some of the inconsistencies identified during the inspection, for example the effectiveness with which teachers question pupils. These checks do not identify precisely enough the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, so the feedback leaders give is not helping teachers to improve quickly enough. This is despite the ample training leaders have provided for teachers.
- Leaders ensure that teachers test pupils at regular intervals so they can track each pupil's attainment and progress. However, inspectors found that the work in pupils' workbooks does not match the stronger recorded assessment information. This gives leaders an overly positive view of how the school is performing. Furthermore, leaders do not analyse or evaluate the performance of different groups of pupils. They do not have a clear picture, for example, of how boys' performance compares with that of girls.
- The proprietor and leaders have organised the teaching of girls and boys separately. Both groups receive the same curriculum and are taught by the same teachers. Leaders do not attempt to provide any educational reasons for this; the reorganisation provides no educational advantage. However, neither is there any inspection evidence that the practice disadvantages or discriminates against either boys or girls.
- The proprietor and leaders are effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. The citizenship curriculum gives pupils a well-developed understanding of different ways of living.
- Leaders provide a curriculum that meets all the statutorily required aspects of learning. They balance national curriculum subjects with studies to develop pupils' religious understanding. Religious courses make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. In addition, pupils enjoy a broad and regularly changing programme of extra-curricular activities. Leaders recognise that the current range of GCSE courses on offer is narrow and that pupils would benefit from more choice, including the opportunity to qualify for the English Baccalaureate.
- Leaders provide impartial careers guidance and advice. In personal, health and social education lessons, pupils learn how to present themselves for interview and how to complete applications for apprenticeships and post-16 school or college placements. During the last three years of schooling, pupils have regular access to independent advice from an external careers adviser. All pupils undertake work experience and professional people are invited to speak to older pupils about their experience of working life. All this helps pupils to go on to study programmes suited to their aspirations and achievements. However, the limited range of qualifications on offer narrows pupils' choice.
- Leaders have created a culture of aspiration, hard work and unity. As a result, pupils value their education and enjoy school. The oldest pupils in particular work exceptionally hard.

Governance

- The proprietor, whose responsibility it is to see that the school meets the independent school standards, does not have sufficient oversight of pupils' academic standards. In partnership with leaders, the proprietor has created a clear vision and aims rooted in strong values. They communicate this well to the whole school community. The proprietor makes regular visits to the school to address staff and pupils and to listen to what they have to say. As a result, the school largely fulfils the aims set out on the school's website.

Safeguarding

- The school meets the independent school standards relating to the welfare and safety of pupils. Leaders carry out the proper checks on adults when recruiting and keep an accurate single record of all these checks as required. Leaders have published a suitable safeguarding policy on the school's website. This policy takes account of statutory requirements.
- All adults are properly trained in how to keep pupils safe. For example, staff understand the dangers of child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation and the signs to look for. Training in extremism and radicalisation also equips staff to know when a pupil may be at risk. Staff know how to record concerns and to whom they should report them.
- The site is safe and secure and all the appropriate routine checks on the premises, such as fire risk assessments and equipment checks, are in order.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is too variable in its quality throughout the school and across a range of subjects. For example, some teachers are adept at asking questions to generate discussion and deepen pupils' thinking, while others are less effective.
- Too few teachers take enough account of what pupils already know and can do when planning teaching, so the most able pupils in particular sit through explanations they do not need and practise work that is too easy. In some cases, inspectors observed pupils doing work they had already attempted successfully a few months earlier. Some teachers plan work that is well matched to the most able but too hard for some other pupils. Teachers attempt to plan work that varies in its difficulty but with limited and variable success.
- A few teachers are more effective at checking during the lesson how well pupils are doing with their learning. However, too often, teachers do not adapt the lesson content to give support or further challenge where needed. For example, in the primary school, many teachers make use of worksheets that are inappropriate because they limit the quality and quantity of pupils' writing, and below-par work goes unchecked or unnoticed.
- Leaders and teachers identify pupils that may need extra help and they sometimes provide extra tuition for these pupils. However, leaders and teachers have not identified any pupils as needing support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, as required by the statutory code of practice.

- In the secondary school, teachers generally know their subject content well. The subject knowledge of some teachers in the primary school is limited, particularly in the teaching of writing and mathematics. This means that teachers do not give pupils precise enough advice to help them progress, for example, in how to make a better sentence. A few adults do not always use standard English when speaking to pupils and writing in workbooks. Primary teachers are not skilled at giving pupils opportunities to attempt tricky mathematical problems, so while pupils have good number and calculation skills, teachers do not deepen pupils' conceptual understanding.
- The teaching of reading in the primary years is much stronger than that of writing and mathematics, so most pupils learn to read with fluency and understand what they read. Teachers give the youngest children a good grounding in early reading. Most go on to develop a love of reading. Pupils' use of the local public library compensates for the limited number of good-quality texts available in school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The strong aspiration and involvement of parents, and the support of teachers, instil in pupils exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' commitment is evident in the large amounts of homework they complete each night.
- Pupils are happy in school. Primary-aged boys and girls socialise well together in the playground. Though secondary boys and girls are separated, they happily understand and accept the cultural and religious reasons for this. Secondary-aged boys demonstrate positive and respectful attitudes towards women teachers.
- Discussions with both boys and girls reveal that pupils have a deep understanding of how different groups protected under law may be discriminated against in a range of situations. Pupils are able to discuss objectively the complexities of how the actions of one group may impinge on the rights of another. They show tolerance and respect for different groups, consistent with principles shared by all major world faiths. Pupils understand how to disagree without being disagreeable. Pupils say that they trust adults to listen to them and that they can raise honest questions about their faith.
- Older pupils show a good understanding of government and how laws are made. They know the names and ideas associated with some key British politicians. Individual pupils campaign to be school councillors and their peers cast votes. Elected school councillors canvass the views of their classmates. Pupils learn about how they can influence change. They engage in a number of fundraising activities for local and national charities.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. Pupils of all ages play safely in the playground and move around the multi-storey building using the stairs with care. Pupils show a good understanding of how to stay safe online.
- Pupils and parents report that bullying is very rare. Leaders and teachers take a zero-tolerance approach to any forms of bullying and deal with any rare incidents successfully so they do not continue.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Adults manage to maintain warm and friendly relationships with pupils while upholding high expectations of their behaviour. Teachers rarely have to apply sanctions.
- Attendance has improved so that it is now at an acceptable level. The small number of pupils whose parents take them on extended visits abroad sometimes negatively affects overall attendance figures. Leaders strongly discourage parents from taking their children abroad during term time. Pupils enjoy attending school and no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.
- Weaker teaching occasionally leads to passivity in learning for older pupils and some occasional minor off-task behaviour for younger pupils. Limited challenge for some pupils means that they too often do not get to demonstrate real resilience. However, pupils are diligent and complete tasks in good time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, just a third of Year 11 pupils achieved GCSEs at grades A* to C in both English and mathematics combined. This is well below what is achieved in most schools.
- Most pupils who took core science GCSE achieved grades A* to C, while the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in additional science was lower than the national average. Grades A* to C rates in the few other subjects studied are variable. For example, two thirds of pupils who entered religious studies GCSE (Islam) achieved grades A* to C and a half of those who were entered managed grades A* to C in Arabic. This variability reflects the variability in the quality of teaching.
- Most pupils entered no more than six GCSEs. A small but significant minority of pupils achieved only one GCSE at grades A* to C. Leaders recognise the need for alternative study paths for those pupils who are not on track to do well in GCSE examinations.
- The standard of work achieved by current pupils in key stage 4 is not good enough for a group of confident, articulate young people who are motivated to do well.
- The quality of work in primary pupils' workbooks shows inconsistent progress. For example, pupils make a good start in writing, but progress stalls in lower key stage 2. In mathematics, many pupils develop fluency in number and calculations, but their reasoning and problem-solving skills are less well developed.
- The most able pupils in particular are not working at a high enough standard across the whole school because teachers do not challenge them consistently well enough in a range of subjects.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading are stronger than in writing and mathematics. Most pupils develop fluency in reading and many are avid readers who have a love of books and literature.
- Inspectors found no difference in the progress and attainment between boys and girls currently in the school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. Most children reach a good level of development by the time they leave Reception and a large minority exceed the early learning goals in some areas of learning, including in reading and writing. About half of the current Reception children have already reached the early learning goal in writing, and the rest are making quick progress towards this. This represents good progress. Children are well prepared for learning by the time they enter Year 1.
- Children's good progress is due in part to adults' accurate assessments of children's achievements; adults know the children well. Assessment records are detailed and comprehensive and identify children's next steps in their learning. Adults use this information to plan learning that is well matched to children's needs.
- Teachers involve adults well in their children's learning. Parents have access to their children's electronic assessment record so they can see what their child is learning and share with the school their children's accomplishments at home. For example, one child's mother wrote how her four-year-old had used the word 'irresponsible'.
- Children in Nursery independently access a wide range of resources that cover all areas of learning in the large classroom. They sustain interest as they play and explore. For example, one child experimented with a range of tools, concentrating intently on shifting sand into a mountain. The Nursery provision, the fees for which are partly funded by the local authority, represents good value for money.
- Conversely, the more limited range and layout of resources in the small Reception classroom hamper opportunities for children to engage in good-quality, self-initiated play and exploration. Furthermore, children do not have access to outside provision. Leaders plan to set up a Reception classroom adjacent to the nursery, where children will have better opportunities for play inside and outside.
- Adults intervene effectively in children's learning. Teachers and support staff ask questions that encourage children to enquire, think and talk. Adults instil confidence in the children, who speak in full sentences and ask questions. Children join in songs and rhymes with gusto and learn to recite prayers.
- The early years provision meets all the welfare requirements. The ratio of staff to children is high. Children follow instructions and safely ascend and descend the stairways to and from the playground.
- The early years leader knows the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and has a good knowledge of effective early years practice.

School details

Unique reference number	134429
DfE registration number	380/6117
Inspection number	10025955

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Saiful Islam
Chair	Saiful Islam
Headteacher	Munir Azam
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,500 to £2,000
Telephone number	01274 488593
Website	www.almumin.bradford.sch.uk
Email address	pri@almumin.bradford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2014

Information about this school

- Al Mu'min is registered as an independent day Muslim faith school for up to 460 boys and girls aged from three to 18 years. All pupils are Muslim. The school provides an Islamic and secular education.
- Pupils are mostly of Asian heritage. Very few do not speak English as their first language.

- The school's website describes the school's aims as being to 'promote moral and academic excellence in a caring and Islamic environment, providing opportunities for realisation of the children's fullest potential. Our school aims to provide a rich and rewarding environment within which pupils may benefit from a cross-curricular approach to Islamic education.'
- Since the last inspection, all of the pupils have moved into a single building. Primary boys and girls are taught together in mixed classes. Secondary boys and girls are taught separately in different parts of the building.
- There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- There were no Year 11 pupils on roll in 2015. There are currently no Year 10 boys on roll.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nearly all year groups at least once. A number of lesson observations took place with senior leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked in pupils' workbooks and questioned pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors discussed with pupils what it is like to be a young person at the school. They observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with the proprietor, the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors took into account 10 responses to the parent online survey (Parent View), and 28 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of management documents. Records relating to behaviour and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Phil Riozzi, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter McKenzie

Ofsted Inspector

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