

# Fig Tree Primary School

30 Bentinck Road, Hyson Green, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG7 4AF

## Inspection dates

4–6 July 2017

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Inadequate</b>           |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Inadequate</b>           |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Inadequate</b>           |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good                        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The school has undergone frequent changes to leadership over the past two years and is currently led by an acting headteacher, supported by an acting deputy headteacher. Its capacity to improve is limited.
- Roles and responsibilities are currently unclear. Information on the school's website is out of date, as are many of the school's policies.
- Leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards are met. There are particular weaknesses with regard to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- The proprietor and the governors have not held leaders to account for the standards at the school.
- The school building is currently in a poor state of repair. Many urgent repairs are needed and pupils' health and welfare are at risk.
- Leaders have not responded quickly enough to actions identified by the recent fire risk assessment.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders do not have sufficient training, expertise or time to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Leaders have not kept up the checks on the quality of teaching. They do not provide governors with up-to-date information about the standards in the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies between subjects and classes. There are too few opportunities for teachers to develop their teaching skills.
- Pupils do not make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. In some classes, they underachieve in writing while in others, progress in reading is too slow.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Attendance has declined in the previous year. Too many pupils miss significant periods of schooling.
- Some pupils' work is poorly presented. Pupils do not take sufficient care of their books and the school's scant resources.
- Pupils' knowledge of public institutions, and of some aspects of equal opportunities, is under-developed.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and staff are deeply committed to the school's ethos and values. There is a strong culture of respect.
- Pupils are polite, welcoming and confident. They know their school has many shortcomings but remain fiercely proud of it.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - reviewing roles and responsibilities and ensuring that all leaders have the time, training and status to carry out their roles effectively
  - updating the school's policies so that they reflect current staffing and practice
  - improving the provision for pupils to learn about equal opportunities
  - carrying out a systematic review of health and safety procedures and putting systems in place to monitor this on an ongoing basis
  - improving the culture of safeguarding in the school, so that all staff know the importance of recording, reporting and following up their concerns
  - increasing the opportunities for teachers to improve their skills by learning from the best practice in the school and elsewhere
  - reinstating the checks on the monitoring of teaching, to ensure that all staff are consistently applying the school's policies
  - ensuring that the information given to parents is clear and accurate.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - older pupils have more opportunities to practise writing at length in English and across the curriculum
  - teachers and staff provide effective support for the least able readers
  - all teachers have high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work, and that pupils apply their skills in handwriting, spelling and grammar in all their written work
  - pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics are as well developed as their calculation skills
  - where classes are taught together, the work is sufficiently challenging for all pupils, especially the most able
  - the teaching of history, geography and science enables pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in these subjects to a consistently high standard.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - urgently carrying out repairs to the school building, ensuring that leaders take swift actions in response to the recent fire risk assessment, and improving the fabric and decor of classrooms, corridors and other communal areas
  - improving the range of activities on offer at breaktimes
  - reinstating links with local schools and places of worship so that pupils are able to make a positive contribution to the local community, improve their knowledge of public institutions and their understanding of the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act

- reducing rates of absence, by working with the families of those pupils who miss significant periods of schooling to ensure that they understand the importance of good attendance.

### **The school must meet the following independent school standards**

- Ensure that the programme of personal, social, health and economic education encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(d)(ii)).
- Ensure that the curriculum at the school offers effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society (paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(i)).
- Ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils enables pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely (paragraphs 5, 5(b), 5(b)(iii) and 5(b)(iv)).
- Ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils encourages respect for other pupils paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (paragraphs 5, 5(b) and 5(b)(vi)).
- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- Ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction (paragraphs 18, 18(2), 18(2)(b) and 20(6)(a)(ii)).
- The proprietor must keep a register which shows that a check was made to establish that each member of staff appointed is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction (paragraphs 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(4) and 21(6)).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable toilets and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils (paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a)).

- The proprietor must ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils and accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a) and 24(1)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).
- The proprietor must ensure that toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water and that cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such (paragraphs 28(1), 28(1)(b) and 28(1)(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request (paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year are made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(3) and 32(3)(f)).
- The proprietor must ensure that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school, provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about and available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher (paragraphs 33, 33(g), 33(i)(i) and 33(i)(ii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently, fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The school has undergone many changes of leadership over the past two years and is currently led by an acting headteacher. Roles and responsibilities are unclear. Some leaders do not have sufficient training, experience or time to carry out their roles effectively. The school, therefore, lacks capacity to improve.
- The proprietor and leaders do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the independent school standards. There are many unmet standards, particularly in relation to the health, welfare and safety of pupils and the school premises.
- The school building is in a poor state of repair. Health and safety checks are not sufficiently rigorous. Leaders have taken too long to respond to urgently needed repairs and moderations, including to its fire safety systems. This has put pupils unnecessarily at risk.
- Teachers have had too little opportunity to learn from each other, or from good practice elsewhere, in order to develop their teaching skills. Leaders have clear expectations for teaching staff, but lack capacity currently to check that all staff live up to these expectations.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff are aware of and follow the school's policies. Many policies have not been updated since new leaders came to post. It is not always clear to staff and parents who is responsible for implementing the policy, or who they should turn to for advice and guidance.
- Leaders have introduced a new system to track pupils' progress and use information about their prior attainment to set challenging targets for their achievement. This new system is not well understood or effectively used by all staff.
- The school's website has not been updated for some time. The information for parents is confusing, misleading or missing. The school's safeguarding policy on the website differs from the one kept in hard copy.
- There are some strengths in leadership. Leaders, including governors, remain deeply committed to the school's mission statement, to create 'hard-working, well-mannered and well-informed young Muslims'. An ethos of courtesy and respect governs the school's work.
- The school's curriculum enables pupils to develop sound literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, they gain a secure grounding in Islamic studies. The curriculum time given to history, geography and science can vary, as the timetable is not always adhered to. At the time of the inspection, pupils had not taken part in these lessons for several weeks.
- The school's policies indicate a well-intentioned commitment to ensuring respect for the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Pupils' understanding of these issues is not well developed, however. For example, they have little understanding of the different types of families to be found in modern Britain, or of public institutions.
- Previous leaders had established good links with other schools and community groups, and visits to places of worship and of cultural and social interest. These links have not been maintained. Pupils have had far fewer trips and visits than previously and have less

opportunity to make a positive contribution to the community. Art and music lessons allow pupils to develop some cultural awareness. There are weaknesses, however, in the school's current provision for pupils' social and cultural development.

- The school caters well for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said that they enjoyed being able to practise and learn more about their faith. The school enables pupils to develop a keen sense of social justice. They take part in fundraising activities, such as donating their unwanted clothes to those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take part in after-school clubs, such as football and art. These sessions do not run in the summer term but there are other extra-curricular sessions on offer. During the inspection, they eagerly took part in their sports day and were excitedly preparing for speech day.
- The values that govern the school's work are well understood by staff, parents and pupils. Pupils know the importance of being kind and treating others with respect.

## **Governance**

- Governors do not hold leaders to account to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. Their own understanding of these standards is limited.
- The governors have set out their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding in the school's policy. They have not fulfilled these responsibilities. They have not ensured, for example, that the designated safeguarding lead has sufficient time and status to carry out this important role effectively.
- Governors have not ensured that the school has complied with its own policies, and with the relevant legislation, when carrying out the checks on the suitability of staff.
- The governing body holds regular meetings, but governors do not use these meetings well. Governors do not currently have enough information about the school's work to be able to judge its quality. There are plans in place for school leaders to provide governors with regular reports, but these have not been put in place. Governors are therefore not able to fully evaluate all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors are deeply committed to the school. They acknowledge that the school is too isolated and has not learned from good practice elsewhere. They have recently reorganised the structure of the governing body, so that each governor takes responsibility for one aspect of the school's work. It is too soon to judge the impact of this work.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The school's policy for safeguarding does not reflect the current legislation. Leaders' understanding of this guidance is weak.
- The checks carried out on staff before they begin employment at the school do not meet the requirements. Leaders have not ensured that all staff have suitable references or that their employment history has been fully checked. Changes to staff and leadership have left a gap in the understanding of what checks need to be done.

- Not all parents know who the designated safeguarding lead is. They do not know who to approach if they have safeguarding concerns or are seeking help themselves.
- Leaders do not have a secure understanding of the range of risks to which pupils may be vulnerable. They do not believe that there are any safeguarding concerns at the school.
- The school has not established a culture where teachers readily share, report and record their concerns. Staff have taken part in training, but are not alert to the fact that behaviour issues, for example, may be linked to safeguarding concerns.
- A high proportion of pupils enter and leave the school during the school year. Leaders have taken appropriate action to inform the local authority about pupils who are educated at home, for example. The procedures for notifying the authority are not set out in the school's policies. Should there be further changes of staff and leaders, the procedures would not be clear.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much between classes and subjects. There are strengths in teaching, but there are also significant weaknesses.
- The teaching of reading does not enable pupils to make consistently good progress across the school. The guided reading sessions are not used consistently well to ensure that pupils develop the skills they need to be effective readers. The younger, least-able pupils do not receive enough support quickly enough to catch up with their peers.
- The opportunities for pupils to write at length vary from class to class. Writing tasks for older pupils are not sufficiently demanding.
- The teaching of history, geography and science is too variable. Teachers do not always abide by the planned curriculum, and these subjects are not always taught on a regular basis. Pupils' skills in these subjects are not consistently well developed.
- The pupils regularly practise handwriting, grammar and spelling but do not apply these skills well enough in their written work. At times, teachers accept work that is beneath the standard of which pupils are capable.
- The teaching of mathematics enables pupils to develop confident calculation skills. Nevertheless, there are too few opportunities for pupils to try out problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Not all teachers manage the combined-age classes well. There are times when the older and the most able pupils listen to the instructions for the younger pupils and are not given work to do themselves.
- Where learning is most effective, it is because teachers plan learning that is both challenging and engaging. In Year 1, for example, pupils enjoyed counting out sweets and constructing pictograms.
- Teachers assess pupils' achievements in English and mathematics at frequent intervals and make careful notes on what pupils have achieved in these subjects. They then use this information to plan learning that is at the right level. The new system to record and track pupils' progress is not well used by all staff, however.



- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their explanations are clear and they support pupils well. Their plans are detailed and comprehensive, but are not always followed.
- In the younger classes, pupils make rapid progress in writing as they have regular practice in writing sentences, paragraphs and longer pieces of written work.
- Teachers make the most of opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, social and moral learning. For example, in the Year 1 and 2 class, pupils compared life in Britain and Ghana. The teacher skilfully prompted the pupils to reflect on the very different life chances for children growing up in Ghana.
- There are successful examples of teaching in science. In the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils develop a range of scientific skills. Regular teaching has improved the pupils' skills in making predictions, carrying out experiments and using scientific language to write conclusions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Many of the standards relating to the health, welfare and safety of pupils are unmet. The health and safety checks are not sufficiently rigorous or frequent. Current staff are not sufficiently well trained in health and safety matters, and do not have time to check on and respond to issues. There is no system for staff to report health and safety concerns.
- Urgent repairs are needed to the building. Ceiling tiles are loose in some classrooms, while damp and mould are evident in others. Unsafe practices, such as covering electrical sockets with paper, place pupils at risk.
- Leaders have not yet implemented those actions that were deemed critical in the school's recent fire risk.
- Currently, the school has no medical room. Should a pupil fall ill, staff may not be able to treat them effectively.
- The risk assessments that leaders carry out for trips and other activities do not pay close attention to the specific risks involved. The upper part of the building is used as residential accommodation. Leaders have not taken sufficient action to minimise the risks to which this situation might give rise.
- Classrooms, corridors and communal areas are not conducive to pupils' learning and welfare. Some classrooms have stimulating, creative displays but in other parts of the building, displays are dated and tatty.
- On the whole, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Their knowledge of public institutions is not secure, however, and they do not have a full understanding of different types of families.
- The values of the school are well embedded in its work. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to practise and learn more about their religion. They develop into thoughtful and reflective young people.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying in the school. They feel safe, and have absolute

trust in their teachers, with whom they enjoy positive and supporting relationships.

- Pupils' physical health is promoted through healthy eating days and regular physical activity. They enjoy their physical education lessons.
- During the inspection, the pupils took part in the school's annual sports day. They took pride in explaining the different activities, earning points for their house team and cheering each other on. Their excitement was palpable.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance has declined over the past year, and is well below the average for primary schools. Some pupils miss significant periods of schooling to take holidays abroad.
- Pupils do not present their work neatly or take good enough care of their books, many of which are torn and marked.
- The school's records show that there are times when pupils' behaviour falls well short of the standard expected.
- There is too little to do at breaktimes. Pupils told the inspector they would welcome more games and activities. Leaders acknowledge that this may be the cause of some of the poor behaviour.
- Pupils are polite, engaging and welcoming. They speak with confidence and know the importance of showing respect. They know what needs to improve, but are fiercely proud of their school.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

## **Requires improvement**

- Rates of progress vary between subjects and classes. Some of the older most-able pupils underachieve in writing, because teaching does not enable them to build on the good progress they make lower down the school. These pupils do not develop the skills necessary to achieve the higher standards in their work.
- In some classes, progress in reading is below the level expected. Pupils in the younger classes who need to catch up in reading do not make good progress, because teachers do not pay close enough attention to their needs.
- In some classes, pupils do not develop the knowledge, skills and understanding expected in history, geography and science.
- Pupils in the current Year 1 have not all passed the phonics screening check. However, all the current Year 2 pupils have achieved this measure.
- Where pupils achieve well, it is because teachers pay careful attention to what they know and can do and set them work that builds on their achievements.
- The younger pupils make rapid progress in writing and mathematics and achieve standards in line with those expected for their age. This is because teachers set high expectations for what they can achieve.
- Pupils achieve well in certain aspects of the mathematics curriculum. They are confident in the use of number, measurement and geometry. Their problem-solving and reasoning skills are less well developed.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 132190   |
| DfE registration number | 892/6013 |
| Inspection number       | 10033530 |

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                 | 5 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 50   |
| Number of part-time pupils          | 0  |
| Proprietor                          | Academy trust  |
| Chair                               | Tariq Nasir  |
| Headteacher                         | Altaf Mohammed   |
| Annual fees (day pupils)            | £1,800   |
| Telephone number                    | 01159 788152   |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.figtreesprimary.co.uk">www.figtreesprimary.co.uk</a>       |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:office@figtreesprimary.co.uk">office@figtreesprimary.co.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 8–11 December 2014   |

## Information about this school

- Fig Tree Primary School is an independent primary school with an Islamic religious character. It is located near to the centre of Nottingham.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school was last inspected in December 2014 by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate. Since that inspection, it has undergone several changes to leadership and staffing. The number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection.

- The proprietor, the Crescent Education Trust Ltd, consists of four directors. One of the directors is the chair of the governing body.

### **Information about this inspection**

- The inspector observed learning across a range of subjects in all classes. A scrutiny of pupils' work in different subjects was undertaken. The inspector attended part of the school's sports day and observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime.
- The inspector held meetings with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, the school's designated safeguarding lead and with the four members of the governing body. Formal meetings were held with three groups of pupils, and the inspector spoke informally with other pupils in lessons and at breaktimes. A discussion was held with a trainee teacher.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records of attendance, behaviour and safeguarding, records of the monitoring of teaching and information about the achievement of current pupils. The inspector looked at long-term curriculum plans and at examples of tracking.
- The inspector reviewed the school's website and considered a range of policies.
- A tour of the premises was undertaken alongside school leaders.
- The inspector took into account the four responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys. The inspector spoke with parents as they brought their children to school, and at the sports day.

### **Inspection team**

Deirdre Duignan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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