

Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation

Dawson House, 24 Ladbroke Road, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2SR

Inspection dates

10–12 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Calm, principled and determined leadership has meant that, despite the challenge of moving premises, this school has improved markedly since its previous inspection.
- Leaders and staff work tirelessly and passionately in the best interests of pupils.
- The incredibly strong, positive and well-established ethos and shared values are palpable throughout the school.
- The promotion of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally effective. Pupils are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- While actively encouraged to have their own opinions and question the things they learn, pupils are also deeply respectful. It is clearly evident that pupils love school.
- The school's teaching successfully instils a strong sense of self-discipline that means that pupils behave extremely well. They are confident, polite and friendly.
- Academically, pupils do well and sometimes exceptionally well. They make outstanding progress in reading and develop a deep and inquisitive love of books.
- Children get off to the strongest of starts in the outstanding early years provision.
- Although some variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains, there is also some highly effective practice. Leaders have a strong track record of developing and improving new teachers.
- Extra support to help pupils who fall behind is effective. The most able pupils also make strong progress. Leaders are rightly looking for ways to check how pupils whom teachers assess as exceeding age-related expectations compare with similar pupils in other schools.
- All of the independent school standards are met. Trustees are highly supportive in their work to help the school flourish. The whole community is proud of their school, and rightly so.

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?

- Spread the highly effective practice in teaching, learning and assessment that exists more widely so that pupils make substantial and sustained progress across the curriculum in all classes.
- Continue work already begun to secure a deep and shared understanding of what exceeding age-related expectations means when comparing with other pupils nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Under the quiet but highly credible leadership of the headteacher, there is a strong sense of unity. Pupils and staff thrive in this very supportive environment, where everyone is valued.
- Leaders' meticulous attention to detail, without losing sight of their core aims and values, has kept this school improving strongly through a turbulent period. In the last academic year, the whole school has not only had to move sites, but suffered the additional huge disappointment, at an advanced stage of planning, of not securing the original premises leaders had hoped for. Staffing changes, for a variety of reasons, have presented an additional challenge.
- With no sense of complacency, leaders are highly driven to secure the best possible offer for pupils and their families. A very well-established, systematic approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement has evolved over time. Leaders' evaluations do not focus narrowly on processes or the actions they have completed, but delve deeply to evaluate how well policies are applied and what differences they make for pupils.
- Leaders' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Senior leaders work across this school and its partner school in Haringey, although each school has a dedicated headteacher. During a turbulent year affecting some shared leadership arrangements, trustees and leaders built in regular review points to check the effectiveness of any change in leadership arrangements. This evaluative approach that dovetails strategic and operational thinking is a key and constant strand of this highly effective leadership.
- Continuing professional development for staff is carefully structured and supports school improvement extremely well. Teachers feel valued and see the drive for improvement as a 'collaborative' process. They feel ownership of the training sessions that they lead for each other, such as the recent poetry workshop. Academic and educational research has a prominent place.
- Through the well-conceived annual review cycle, pupils' progress and teacher performance are tracked carefully over time. There is a detailed and layered approach to monitoring all aspects of teaching, learning and pupils' progress. All teachers are subject to performance management, which is linked to their salaries. Teachers are provided with constructive and pertinent next steps in developing their practice. Leaders and teachers have a strong track record of working in partnership to develop effective and sometimes highly effective classroom practice.
- The school is highly successful in achieving its aim that pupils 'should be confident in their identity as British citizens and feel empowered to fully participate in British society and their local communities'. Work to promote tolerance and harmony between different faiths, cultures and beliefs is deeply embedded, and pupils take a genuine interest in this learning. During their time at the school, pupils develop a deep-rooted understanding of the school's values and their strong links with fundamental British values. They are able to articulate the issues surrounding these concepts well.
- Pupils benefit from a rich and varied curriculum. A strong emphasis on developing pupils' language and critical thinking supports their learning effectively across a broad range of

subjects. Various visitors to the school, and diverse educational visits beyond, enrich pupils' experiences and learning. Older pupils explore different sorts of relationships openly in the 'justice and equality' theme. At all ages, pupils learn to be tolerant and respectful of others' similarities and differences.

- The school meets the needs of the few pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities well, alongside other pupils who may just require extra short-term support to catch up with their peers. Where necessary, leaders work in partnership with parents to access assessment or advice from other specialist professionals. Leaders and teachers use this advice diligently to make suitable adaptations to enable all pupils to make sufficient progress.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about what the school offers. They value highly the school's strong ethos and close links with them.

Governance

- The director of education is currently also the chair of trustees. She recognises that this dual role is not necessarily ideal, but it has not had a detrimental effect on the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- Together with the director of education, trustees fulfil their strategic function well. Comprehensive reports to the trustees from the director of education reflect a clear cycle and strategy for improvement through the identification of 'achievements, concerns and action points'. Identifying the retention of teaching staff as a barrier to even greater improvement, trustees recently carried out and implemented a salary review linked to both retention and succession planning.
- Trustees' responsibilities are clearly assigned, individually and collectively. The systematic 'trustee support visit cycle' covers a broad range of the school's work. Trustees draw on their wealth of other knowledge, experience and expertise to enhance the work of the school. They give freely of their time and share the ambition, passion and commitment for the school that are so evident in the school's leaders.
- Trustees work in a supportive way to enable and encourage school leaders and staff to be the best that they can be. Although they see their role as one of support rather than challenge, school leaders confirm that trustees are unafraid to ask probing questions or identify areas that could be improved.
- Trustees and leaders ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a striking clarity of purpose across all safeguarding policy, processes and practice. Staff are extremely well trained and have a keen sense of their individual responsibility to safeguard pupils. The school's detailed and comprehensive safeguarding policy, available on the website, is implemented very effectively. Leaders pay close attention to the most recent statutory guidance.
- The school's overarching strategy for safeguarding is one of 'prevention, protection and support'. Leaders emphasise the importance of observing and listening to children carefully to identify any warning signs regarding their safety or welfare. Any concerns

about pupils that do arise are meticulously recorded alongside the actions arising.

- Leaders are proactive in seeking advice or consulting with other appropriate professionals and agencies to check that they are doing all that they should. Leaders work closely with parents regarding any concerns about their children's safety or welfare.
- Leaders' work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism is deeply considered. Detailed policy statements on the 'Prevent' duty refer explicitly to government guidance. Leaders have reflected extremely carefully about the implications for the school's individual context and how to safeguard its pupils effectively. The curriculum places a high and successful priority on developing pupils' analytical abilities and giving them the skills to question and challenge different viewpoints in an appropriate manner. There are extensive vetting procedures in place for any external speakers.
- The single central register meets all requirements. A thorough and systematic approach to recruitment and pre-employment checks ensures that there is no reasonable doubt about the suitability of staff or volunteers to work with children. The administrator responsible for carrying out the checks and maintaining the records is suitably trained, confident and knowledgeable about the relevant procedures.
- Trustees audit a wide range of safeguarding procedures and practices to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Typically effective teaching, learning and assessment contribute to pupils' overall good academic progress over time. They also make an exceptional contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being.
- Some pupils benefit from highly effective teaching. For example, some teachers are extremely skilful in their use of questioning. Teachers demonstrably value pupils' answers, giving them time to think, before probing them to reflect more deeply, reason and extend their responses.
- Following the school's move, the community has worked tirelessly to make the internal environment bright, attractive and conducive to effective learning. Classroom environments are well organised, reflecting the productive learning that takes place within. Teachers draw on available resources effectively to support learning.
- Combining with the positive physical environment, the focused and purposeful approach of teachers and pupils creates an industrious atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Teachers are confident and consistent in following the school's approaches to teaching and assessment. They demonstrate considerable professional commitment and are entirely pupil-focused in their work. Teachers draw on the strength of their collective subject knowledge, taking the opportunity to utilise each other's particular expertise.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and themselves. They know each pupil extremely well and convey a real clarity of understanding about pupils' particular starting points. Teachers plan work for pupils that is at least pitched at an age-appropriate level, and look for opportunities to stretch and challenge beyond, where appropriate. Some teachers are particularly adept at continuously meeting the different needs within the

class, but others are not quite at this stage of their own development.

- Homework routines are clearly established and diligently followed. This contributes well to the quality of teaching and learning in class, for example, through setting reading tasks to prepare for the following day's lesson. Pupils and the overwhelming majority of parents find that the homework is appropriate, although a few parents say that there is a little too much of it.
- Leaders have worked extremely hard to minimise the impact of staff changes on pupils. However, despite their best endeavours, these changes have hampered otherwise successful work to lift the overall quality of teaching even further since the previous inspection. Within a picture that is positive overall, some variability in the quality of teaching remains currently, and existed over the last academic year.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are rightly extremely proud of their school. They are very polite and respectful, but incredibly warm and welcoming to visitors. Pupils listen carefully and with genuine interest to each other, unafraid to challenge a different viewpoint without this leading to inappropriate conflict.
- Parents are unanimous that their children are well cared for and feel safe in school. Pupils themselves also report that they feel safe and happy at school. They develop a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including through visits from the emergency services. Older pupils are very alert to the sorts of actions that could place them at risk of being groomed while online, as well as other aspects of e-safety. They are very clear about the suitable steps they would take if they felt worried or in danger.
- Pupils report that bullying is exceptionally rare, and some pupils are unaware of it happening in school at all. Almost all parents agree that any bullying that might happen is dealt with effectively. Pupils like the school's simple but effective 'stop, think, fix' approach, used to encourage pupils to reflect on how to adapt their behaviour.
- Leaders are determined to equip pupils with the skills and attributes that they need to make a valuable contribution to British society. From role playing doctors in the Nursery, girls are provided with positive role models and encouraged to be ambitious about their futures. Pupils are taught how to speak confidently, including to larger audiences. They have a voice in running the school and develop an appropriate understanding of democratic processes through their own 'shura' school council. Older pupils visit the Houses of Parliament. Pupils are used to making choices in their work or going with the choice of the majority.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- A strong theme of mutual respect and individual responsibility underpins the school's behaviour policy.

- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well throughout the day, including when moving up and down the stairs and in assembly. They clearly enjoy the freedom on the playground to relax and have fun. Their obvious respect for one another allows breaktimes to be harmonious and safe occasions, despite the array of soft balls and other equipment in a relatively confined space. Throughout the day, supervision is effective but unobtrusive, a mark of pupils' strong self-discipline.
- Behaviour in lessons is routinely impeccable. Staff are unanimously positive about pupils' behaviour and the school's approach to dealing with any misbehaviour. There is a clarity of approach among staff, who implement suitable systems and processes to manage behaviour consistently.
- Behaviour records demonstrate adults' high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Leaders take effective and prompt action to address any rare concerns that may be more serious, working in close partnership with parents. Several parents commented that their children's behaviour markedly improved at home upon joining the school.
- Almost all pupils come to school regularly. Leaders have worked hard and with success to ensure that a minority of late attenders attend school promptly. Staff conscientiously follow rigorous and clearly defined procedures for tackling any attendance or punctuality issues.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils do well across a broad range of areas. In some classes, they make significant strides in their learning. Standards have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The language and literacy elements of pupils' development are particular strengths. Pupils make exceptionally strong progress in reading. They are enthusiastic about reading and access a wide range of challenging texts reflecting diverse cultures and genres. Firm foundations in the use of phonics for younger children support their swift progress and engagement in books. Older pupils read confidently, discussing and developing their understanding of complex vocabulary and ideas.
- The curriculum provides pupils with frequent opportunities to write for a rich range of purposes. Often, these draw on learning in other domains such as geography, history or religious studies. The pride that pupils take in their work is clear to see by their neat handwriting and careful presentation. Some pupils transfer their skills readily through different themes, producing mature, carefully considered and technically accurate writing about a broad range of topics. Others are less adept at remembering some of their basic sentence punctuation when caught up in their creative ideas.
- Pupils' grasp of mathematical calculations and associated number skills is well developed. Pupils, including the most able, are exposed to tasks that require them to problem-solve or reason increasingly frequently across the school.
- In science, pupils accurately use a good range of subject-specific vocabulary. They develop a variety of skills and produce detailed and carefully drawn scientific diagrams.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to engage in art activities, although their progress and development in this area are less marked. Leaders are in the process of forging links with

an art gallery to further enhance pupils' learning.

- Most-able pupils do well because tasks often allow them the scope to extend or hone their skills. The strong and successful focus on language, discussion and debate is effective in challenging their thinking. Consequently, this has a positive impact on their ability to reason in mathematics and write developed analytical responses to texts in English.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support that they need, and take the same pride in their work as other pupils. Teachers identify precisely the next steps they, or other pupils that may have fallen behind, need to take. They plan carefully how they are going to promote this learning within a suitable time frame, which is monitored tightly.
- Although the school's assessment information shows significant numbers of pupils are working at above age-related expectations, these pupils have not always mastered important aspects of their learning in the previous year's curriculum. The director of education has questioned the picture that the school's chosen computerised system for tracking pupils' outcomes presents and, correctly, has begun to explore this with teachers and leaders. Leaders hope to make links with other schools to check how pupils' outcomes across year groups compare with pupils in other schools, particularly those judged to be exceeding age-related expectations.
- The variability in the quality of teaching over time that has affected a small number of classes has led to some unevenness in pupils' progress over time within an overall strong picture.
- Pupils also learn Arabic, which, for almost all pupils, is an additional language. Their beautifully presented Arabic script is proudly displayed alongside their other writing. Leaders report that pupils make excellent progress in their learning, with some able to gain a GCSE qualification early on in their secondary schools as a result.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Strong and unwavering leadership has sustained and built on the effective early years provision, despite the significant challenges posed by moving premises since the previous inspection. All independent school standards and welfare requirements linked to the early years are met.
- Early in the year, adults quickly establish calm and helpful routines that enable children to feel safe and secure so that they are eager to join in. Leaders and teachers place an early emphasis on establishing productive sessions where children can choose their own activities. Consequently, adults skilfully use children's own interests to capture their imagination and engage them in meaningful learning in an age-appropriate and non-threatening way. The tone and atmosphere of these sessions are exceptionally positive and purposeful. Adults' very well-judged interactions with children support their learning effectively as they play.
- Adults develop an in-depth knowledge of each individual. In Nursery, through the rapid identification of each child's starting point, teachers provide the right opportunities to help children swiftly take the first strides in their learning. Most-able Nursery children were readily selecting purposeful writing opportunities, inspired by the postbox and letter about

a sick doll in the baby clinic.

- From starting points in Nursery that are often lower than those typical for their ages, children make rapid progress so that they are well prepared for Reception. These advances are sustained throughout Reception, so that by the end of early years, children are very well prepared for Year 1. The proportion reaching a good level of development is well above the national average, with a large number of children already exceeding this.
- Children benefit from the language-rich environment. At the time of the inspection, the high-quality role-play areas included a baby clinic in Nursery and a travel agents in Reception. Reception children confidently put their phonics into practice through sounding out words to read and write, with some already writing a sentence or more. Children who speak English as an additional language swiftly extend their English vocabulary. Children also make a positive early start with their Arabic alphabet.
- The attractive and well-organised environments provide a wide range of learning opportunities. Leaders' and teachers' high expectations are evident throughout. Resources in the environment are used well to promote early numeracy, with plentiful scope to extend the most able with numbers beyond 20, or through early mathematical reasoning and problem-solving.
- Adults make regular and detailed assessments of children's capabilities. They use this information extremely well to target the right next steps for each individual, either through providing children with the right play opportunities, targeting support or directly teaching something new.
- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. The head of early years has a deep understanding of, and passion about, how young children learn most effectively. As part of the drive to make the early years the best it can be, teachers and leaders attend local network meetings with other schools and take part in local authority checks on the accuracy of their assessments. Leaders follow a regular, thorough and structured cycle of external validation to enhance their self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Leaders and teachers employ numerous successful strategies to build strong partnerships with parents for the benefit of children from the very beginning of their schooling.
- Due to the school's location on the first and second floor, use of the outdoor provision is only available at set times. The space also serves as the school's main playground. However, when used by children from the early years, the area is adequately resourced, with suitably challenging activities. Scrutiny of the school's assessments and children's outcomes across all areas of learning shows that the situation is not having a significantly detrimental effect on children's development. For example, temporary arrangements are made at suitable times of the year to allow children to grow plants. There are plans in place to make use of a nearby park and develop links with an adjacent provider to further enhance children's outdoor learning opportunities.

School details

Unique reference number	134085
DfE registration number	871/6003
Inspection number	10039160

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 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Chair of trustees
Chair	Farah Ahmed
Headteacher	Tahreem Sabir
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3480–£4020
Telephone number	01753 518 000
Website	isf.education
Email address	mail-slough@isfnet.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–6 November 2015

Information about this school

- Following a successful material change inspection, the school has moved premises since the previous full standard inspection, which took place on 3–6 November 2015.
- The school has a strong Islamic ethos, reflecting the principles of Shakhsiyah education, which underpins its curriculum and teaching approaches.
- The school has a partner school in Haringey with which it shares its trustees and senior leaders. Each school has its own headteacher.
- The 'Tifly Day Care' that operated at the time of the previous inspection no longer

operates.

- A very small number of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes at least once to gather evidence about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. Almost all of these visits were carried out jointly with one of the school's senior leaders.
- When visiting classrooms, inspectors scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work and heard some of them read. The inspection team also looked in detail at a range of work, both that provided by leaders and other material requested by inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke informally and held meetings with a wide range of people to ask them about different aspects of the school's work and gather their views. This included pupils, parents, teachers, other staff, school leaders and trustees.
- The inspection team analysed 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took into account nine confidential questionnaires returned by staff. Inspectors considered all of the written comments that were added to these surveys, alongside other inspection evidence.
- During their time in school, inspectors observed the work of the school throughout the day. They also scrutinised a wide range of documentation and procedures relating to both the independent school standards and the quality of education that the school provides.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kathryn Moles

Her Majesty's Inspector

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