

Normanton House School

Normanton House, Village Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 8DF

Inspection dates

17–19 October 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Training for teachers has not focused sharply enough on developing the professional skills that lead to the most effective teaching.
- Leaders and teachers do not make effective use of the plentiful assessment information they gather. As a result, learning does not routinely cater for the different abilities of pupils and there is often insufficient challenge for the most able pupils.
- Pupils' outcomes vary in different subjects. GCSE results in science are lower than in other subjects. In key stages 1 and 2, standards in mathematics are lower than in reading and writing.
- In the early years, children do not develop sound basic skills in all areas of learning. They do not have access to a wide range of activities, both indoors and outdoors, where they can practise the skills they have learned.
- The teaching of phonics is not systematic and children do not develop some of skills that help them to read and write accurately later on.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders and trustees have ensured the school meets all the independent school standards.
- School leaders and trustees promote an aspirational culture that has high expectations of pupils and aims to help them achieve both personally and academically.
- Pupils' safety and welfare is of the highest priority. Leaders and trustees have ensured there are robust procedures in place to record and follow up any concerns.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. They are respectful and motivated to learn.

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?

- Raise standards further so that pupils' achievement in all subjects is consistently in line with national expectations by:
 - improving outcomes in GCSE science
 - improving outcomes in mathematics in key stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good across the school by:
 - providing training for teachers so that they develop further their professional skills and knowledge
 - providing opportunities for teachers to share and observe the effective practice of colleagues
 - ensuring leaders and teachers make effective use of assessment information so that learning is appropriately planned for pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
- Improve provision in the early years so children develop sound basic skills in all areas of learning by:
 - increasing the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year
 - ensuring there is systematic teaching of phonics so children develop skills that will help them read and write accurately
 - increasing the opportunities for children to consolidate their learning through a range of activities, including tasks they can do outdoors
 - reviewing the range of resources to ensure they are being used to maximum effect
 - continuing to work with external agencies to moderate the quality of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The proprietor, school leaders and trustees have ensured the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Leaders and trustees have successfully tackled the areas of weakness from the emergency inspection, but there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. As a result, outcomes in some subjects are weaker than others and some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders and trustees have identified aspects of the school's work that need to improve, but plans are not focused sharply enough on the actions that will have the most impact.
- Assessment information is collected at regular intervals throughout the school. Progress is monitored, but leaders' analysis of the information does not identify where pupils are at risk of falling behind or could do better. Consequently, additional support is not always targeted at the pupils who would benefit most, and the impact of this support is not evaluated systematically.
- Leaders and trustees ensure teachers have access to a range of training, including that available online. However, most of this training relates to safeguarding and welfare of pupils rather than professional development to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Leaders acknowledge that more training needs to be focused on developing professional skills and knowledge and sharing best practice.
- Appraisal for teachers has been introduced recently. Teachers' professional development needs are identified and teachers are expected to review their own performance as part of the appraisal process. This is in the early stages of development and, therefore, any impact is, as yet, unclear.
- The curriculum reflects the religious character of the school and provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects. Extra-curricular opportunities enable pupils to develop their skills and interests further. For example, a pupil's work was published after entering a young writers' competition and other pupils enjoyed taking part in football tournaments and a UK mathematics challenge.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum also supports pupils' understanding of national and global issues. Off-site visits to different places of worship ensure pupils have the opportunity to learn about other religions and cultures. Varied assembly themes promote pupils' understanding of British values, and life within the multicultural society that characterises modern Britain.

Governance

- Trustees work closely with school leaders to promote an aspirational culture that has high expectations of pupils and aims to help them achieve both personally and academically. They want pupils to 'develop a moral code that enables pupils to make the correct choices that are right for them'.

- Regular meetings with school leaders ensure trustees are well informed about the work of the school and its strengths and weaknesses.
- Trustees have an accurate view of the school and are actively involved in setting out plans for further improvement.
- Trustees hold regular forums for parents and seek their views about the school.
- Trustees regularly talk with pupils and visit lessons to gain first-hand experience of how learning is progressing.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and trustees have created a culture of vigilance and place pupils' safety and welfare at the centre of its work. They recognise the importance of working with parents and carers 'positively, openly and honestly' and encourage them to discuss any concerns about their child's welfare with one of the school's safeguarding officers.
- An up-to-date safeguarding policy that reflects the most recent government guidance is available on the school website. The school's procedures for safeguarding are clearly set out. Leaders and trustees have ensured there are robust procedures in place to record and follow up any concerns.
- All staff receive training and regular updates to ensure they can meet their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. For example, staff have been trained in the 'Prevent' duty to safeguard pupils against radicalisation and extremism. Staff know what to do if they have a concern and know the signs to look for.
- The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn, at appropriate levels for their age, how to recognise and manage risk and to keep themselves safe. Pupils also know that they can ask for help and have confidence in teachers to resolve any worries they have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Learning does not always cater for the different abilities of pupils and sometimes lacks challenge for the most able pupils.
- Teachers use a range of questions to check pupils' understanding of their work. However, questioning does not often stretch pupils' thinking or extend their learning.
- Most pupils' work is broadly at the standard for their age. Pupils working at lower standards are given additional support from adults, but the impact of this support has not been evaluated in detail and, as a result, progress is variable.
- Assessment information is not used effectively and teachers are not always clear about the rates of progress being made by individual pupils. This means teachers do not respond quickly enough to pupils' needs, particularly those of the most able, reshaping the learning to provide more support or to move them on more swiftly.

- The teaching of reading and writing does not focus strongly enough on developing pupils' understanding of phonics. As a result, pupils do not have a thorough knowledge of the sounds individual letters and groups of letters make. This means they do not have a full range of strategies to help them read or spell new or difficult words.
- Teachers are diligent and plan their lessons in line with the school's schemes of work. They provide feedback to pupils in accordance with the school's policy. Pupils also learn to assess their own and their peers' work according to given criteria.
- The atmosphere in classrooms is generally quiet and conducive to learning. Pupils are attentive and keen to do their best. Learning is effective when pupils take an active part in discussions. For example, in Year 10 English, the teacher encouraged pupils, 'OK, let's be more specific', to improve or elaborate on their responses, consolidating and deepening their understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to do well. They expect to work hard and try their best. They are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and good relationships with others.
- Teachers promote clear messages about bullying and pupils understand the impact of negative behaviour such as this on the school community. They say bullying is rare and that any incidents are dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They have confidence in staff to support them if they have any worries or concerns. They learn how to stay safe online and are aware of potential dangers. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire all agreed that children are safe and looked after well.
- Older pupils receive useful careers guidance that helps them make choices about their next stage in education, training or employment. Work experience enhances pupils' understanding of the workplace and wider community. Pupils value and enjoy these opportunities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well at all times during the school day. They enjoy the social times, such as lunchtime, where they can play games and chat with friends. In lessons they are attentive and respectful. The school is an orderly environment and any disruptions to learning are rare.
- Attendance is just below the national average overall. School leaders ensure any absences are followed up quickly to make sure pupils are safe. There are clear procedures in place to tackle any persistent absence. While the majority of pupils attend well, there are a number of pupils who take extended holidays which are not authorised by the school, and, therefore, have below average attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in pupils' achievement in different subjects. Assessment information gathered by the school shows that there are also variations between cohorts. Pupils with similar starting points often progress at different rates.
- At GCSE, attainment in science is weaker than in other subjects. Mathematics and English outcomes improved in 2017 but there was little change in other subjects. Pupils' individual assessment profiles in key stages 3 and 4 show that performance varies considerably between subjects, including for the most able. A number achieved very well in some subjects and poorly in others.
- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics is weaker than in reading and writing. Test results for 2017 at the end of key stage 2 were better than in 2016. Although 2017 national averages have yet to be validated, the school's outcomes were broadly in line with the unvalidated national averages in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling, but below in mathematics. However, not all of the most able pupils achieved the higher standard in reading or mathematics. Even though their test scores were above the national average, they were not high enough to achieve the higher standard.
- Pupils' reading skills are generally in line with those expected for their age. However, younger pupils do not have well-developed skills for tackling the reading and spelling of more challenging text. They know the names of letters but not the sounds they make, and this means they cannot decode or build a word bit by bit.
- The majority of pupils are working at standards that are appropriate for their age and make steady progress. Most are well prepared for their next stage in education or training.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children start at the school around the time of their fifth birthday. Their pre-school experiences vary, as do their skills and knowledge. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year is below the national average. This means that some children are not well prepared for Year 1 in some areas of learning.
- The classroom environment is spacious, and there is access to a large outdoor area. However, resources are not used effectively to provide a wide range of activities for children that include the opportunity to consolidate their learning, for example through independent play or discovery, particularly outdoors.
- Schemes of work broadly reflect the key areas of learning outlined in the early years curriculum. However, the phonics scheme of work is not sufficiently detailed to provide children with sound basic skills that will help them read and write accurately when they are older.
- Teachers collect a range of information that shows what children know and can do. Most tasks are closely directed by adults so there is less evidence of what children are learning to do independently.

- Assessments are mainly accurate. However, when representatives of the local authority moderated children's work this year, the school was found to be overly cautious and assessed some aspects of children's work to be less good than was actually the case. As a result of the moderation, leaders have recognised weaknesses in provision and made changes to address the recommendations, and have arranged further external support to improve outcomes for children.
- Children behave well and respond positively to adults who encourage them to discuss and explain their learning. They work happily together and concentrate well on their tasks.
- Teachers are vigilant in ensuring children are safe. They have been trained in paediatric first aid. Staff communicate effectively with parents to ensure any minor concerns are swiftly followed up and resolved.
- All statutory requirements for early years provision are met.

School details

Unique reference number	134294
DfE registration number	831/6006
Inspection number	10033532

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	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al Akram Trust
Chair	Dr Arshad Piracha
Headteacher	N Iqbal
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,100
Telephone number	01332 769 333
Website	www.alakramtrust.org.uk
Email address	admin@alakramtrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 June 2014

Information about this school

- Normanton House is an independent Islamic day school situated close to Derby city centre. There are currently 140 pupils on roll, boys and girls between four and 11 years of age and girls up to the age of 16.
- There are no pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- There are five children in the early years class.
- The school is owned by the Al Akram Trust and provides both Islamic and secular

teaching. Its aims are 'the advancement of education, promotion of Islamic education in particular, promotion of the Islamic faith, benefit the community'.

- Since the last full inspection, the school has had an emergency inspection (7 July 2015) and a progress monitoring inspection (20 June 2016). Both inspections were at the request of the Department for Education and covered Part 3 of the independent schools standards, the welfare, health and safety of pupils. In July 2015, the inspection found there were some unmet standards. In June 2016, all standards were met.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes; the headteachers of the secondary and primary departments accompanied inspectors for all observations.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, teachers and trustees. Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils from key stages 2, 3 and 4 and listened to some primary pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation including school policies, curriculum plans, school improvement plans, analysis of attendance and assessment information.
- Inspectors also scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- Inspectors considered the 19 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. They also took into account the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire. Four pupils completed the recent point-in-time survey.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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