

Fitrah Sips

55 Northumberland Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO14 0EJ

Inspection dates

7–9 November 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	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Satisfactory

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teachers' and leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Consequently, too few pupils reach the expected standards by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders and governors do not have a clear enough understanding of the school's priorities for improving the quality of teaching. As a result, teaching does not always meet pupils' needs, in particular the needs of those who are most able.
- Arrangements for managing the performance of teachers are not rigorous enough.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough practice in developing their reading comprehension skills.
- In mathematics, pupils, in particular the most able pupils, do not have enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills.
- Teachers' questions do not always require pupils to expand on their answers and so deepen their understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has created a warm and welcoming school culture, underpinned by Islamic values, in which pupils thrive.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- When teaching is effective, teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to ask probing questions and set challenging tasks.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They show respect to their teachers and are unfailingly polite to visitors.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well and they approach all their work with enthusiasm.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average for primary schools.

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?

- Improve the leadership of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils, in particular the most able, can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers' planning takes account of the greater levels of challenge contained in the revised national curriculum
 - holding teachers more closely to account for the progress that their pupils make.
- Improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for the most able, by:
 - identifying with greater precision what pupils, in particular the most able pupils, need to do to improve
 - making more consistent use of probing questions and challenging tasks that require pupils to explain their thinking
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their reading comprehension skills
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning skills, for example through problem-solving activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of what actions are necessary to improve pupils' outcomes. Consequently, not enough pupils make the progress in reading, writing and mathematics of which they are capable.
- Arrangements for checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not rigorous enough. Leaders do not hold teachers to account stringently for the progress their pupils make. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school is not yet consistently good.
- The headteacher has recently taken steps to strengthen the leadership of teaching and learning. In particular, teachers have become more skilled at identifying those pupils who have fallen behind in their learning and who need more support. There are signs that pupils who receive this support are beginning to achieve better outcomes. Parents say that they appreciate the opportunities they now have to talk with teachers about how they can help their children at home.
- The headteacher leads the school with integrity and humility. At all times he models to staff and pupils the values of hard work, kindness and respect for others that underpin the school's mission. Leading by example, he has created a warm, nurturing and respectful school culture that has prayer and reflection at its heart.
- From day to day, the school runs very smoothly because the headteacher and office administrator manage the constraints of the building and budget skilfully to ensure that the school meets its stated aims. Consequently, pupils are always engaged in purposeful activity and not a minute of time is wasted during the school day.
- Teachers say that they get good support and helpful training from the school's leaders. Leaders are keenly aware that, in a small independent school, teachers could become isolated from their counterparts in other schools. Leaders have sought to address this by forming relationships with local teaching schools, the local authority and other Muslim schools, in order to provide teachers with sources of advice and ideas.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, ensuring coverage of the national curriculum as well as providing instruction in Islamic studies and Arabic. The well-planned curriculum enables pupils to study a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and humanities. However, a dip in published outcomes for the last two years suggests that leaders have been slow to respond to the greater levels of challenge in the revised national curriculum.
- Leaders' promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school. Pupils gain a deep understanding of Islamic thought and traditions, while at the same time learning about and being respectful of other beliefs and cultures. Pupils get regular opportunities to learn about democracy and the rule of law. Consequently, pupils are responsible citizens who demonstrate a strong understanding of British values. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- All parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke to the inspector voiced strong support for the school, its headteacher and staff. They have chosen the school because it provides an Islamic education, because pupils are taught the

national curriculum and because the school promotes British values. They rightly believe that their children are safe and well-cared for. One parent said that she likes the school because, 'it is like a family'.

- Leaders ensure that pupils are protected from exposure to radical views. In this, they have the full support of the local community, including parents.

Governance

- Governors provide strong oversight of the ethos of the school. They are committed to providing a well-rounded education in which pupils deepen their understanding of the Muslim faith and traditions, as well as being well prepared for work, life and study in modern Britain.
- Governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher and have a sound knowledge of the progress pupils make as they go through the year. However, the information they receive from leaders is not sufficiently detailed. Consequently, they do not yet have a clear enough picture of which aspects of teaching and pupils' progress need the most urgent attention.
- Governors manage the school's finances well. They are ambitious for the school. They provide strong support for the headteacher, for example by providing the funds to appoint a leader of teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils flourish in the warm, nurturing culture that leaders have established. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils' safety and well-being have a high priority. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children are carried out diligently. Staff benefit from regular training on all aspects of safeguarding, including on the 'Prevent' duty. Staff have a secure understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, and they know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil.
- Leaders understand the range of risks to which pupils may be exposed, and ensure that pupils are protected against them. Pupils are taught about fire and road safety. Teachers also ensure that pupils know how to stay safe online.
- The school's designated leaders for safeguarding have undertaken the required training. They keep careful records of all concerns. Leaders are particularly vigilant about children missing from education and are proactive in ensuring close communication with the local authority whenever a pupil joins or leaves the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exceptionally high. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in their learning are not consistently high enough. For example, the most able pupils in the school do not receive the sustained stretch and challenge that they need to make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in reading and writing.

- Teachers are diligent in their planning of schemes of work that ensure coverage of the national curriculum. They plan different activities to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. However, in some cases, pupils are not given the opportunity to explore their learning in sufficient depth. For example, teachers do not always make enough use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and require them to explain their answers.
- In reading, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop comprehension skills that go beyond the recall of factual information. Similarly, in mathematics, there is not enough emphasis on problem-solving.
- Recently, pupils have been given more opportunities to write at length and in a variety of styles. As a result, pupils are starting to make more rapid progress in the development of their writing skills.
- When teaching is effective, teachers use strong subject knowledge and skilful use of questions to arouse pupils' curiosity. Pupils relish grappling with new concepts and solving problems. For example, in a science lesson, pupils learning about air resistance were engrossed in trying to work out which design of a parachute would be most effective. Pupils rose to the challenge of using their scientific knowledge to work out the correct answer.
- Pupils are eager to improve and always work as hard as they possibly can in lessons. However, teachers do not always give pupils the time they need to improve their work before moving on to the next piece.
- Over the last year, teachers have rightly recognised that some pupils need help to catch up with their peers. Individual plans have been put in place, and teaching assistants are deployed well, offering strong support and encouragement to these pupils. Consequently, pupils whose starting points are low are beginning to make more rapid progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are exceptionally strong. Teachers create a supportive and safe environment for learning. Pupils participate enthusiastically in discussions and concentrate well when doing individual work.
- Parents appreciate the time teachers give to talk to them about their children's progress and provide them with advice on what they can do at home to help.
- Homework is set in line with the school's policy. Pupils understand why homework is important and they enjoy completing it.
- Teachers ensure that pupils develop a deep respect for their own religious heritage and an equally deep respect for cultural traditions that are different from their own.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have a mature and exceptionally well-developed sense of their responsibilities as citizens. They are curious about the society they live in and are ambitious for their own futures. They say their daily prayers with reverence and respect.
- Pupils contribute to the life of the school and the community in many ways. They share their views about the school through class and school councils. They have regular

opportunities to raise money for charity, for example in a recent after-school cake sale. Pupils develop their wider interests through clubs and after-school activities.

- Pupils are proud of their school and wear their uniforms smartly. They are at all times polite to each other and to their teachers. They are confident and outgoing, and are keen to engage visitors in conversation. They are outstanding ambassadors for their school, and talk with excitement about what they have learned.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures and religions. They have a deep understanding of the school's Islamic values, and at the same time can explain the key features of other religions, including Christianity. They are open and compassionate in their outlook on the world. For example, pupils spoke with insight and empathy about Remembrance Sunday. As a result, they are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They have an excellent understanding of how to use the internet safely. They are also alert to the risks of fire. As a result of their daily walk to the local park, pupils have a strong awareness of road safety. Pupils also have a very good understanding of healthy eating.
- Pupils understand what bullying is. They do not believe that pupils bully one another at their school. They say that on the rare occasion a pupil says or does something unkind, teachers deal with it quickly and well. The school's own records confirm that there have been very few bullying incidents in the entire history of the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is impeccable. They contribute willingly to class discussions and concentrate fully when required to work alone. When teachers ask them probing questions or set challenging tasks, pupils display resilience and the ability to use their reasoning skills. Pupils are kind and caring towards each other. Pupils' very sensible behaviour on their daily walk to the local park is a credit to the school.
- Pupils love coming to school and rarely miss a day. Overall attendance rates are consistently above national averages for primary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders recognise that, in recent years, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have not been as strong as they should be. In 2017, too few pupils reached age-related expectations by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The progress pupils make from their starting points is variable. In some classes, pupils make rapid and sustained progress, in particular in mathematics and science. However, where teaching does not meet their needs well enough, some pupils do not make the progress or reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly in reading and writing.
- The effective teaching of phonics enables pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop their early reading skills well. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading. They read fluently and with expression. However, as pupils move up the school, their reading comprehension

skills do not develop rapidly enough.

- Generally, outcomes in mathematics for current pupils are stronger than those in reading and writing. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics. However, teachers rightly recognise that pupils need more opportunities to develop their skills in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving if they are to reach the higher scores in national tests.
- While the most able pupils in the school make steady progress, teaching does not provide them with consistent stretch and challenge. As a result, the most able pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils who need additional help or who have fallen behind in their learning now receive effective support. Consequently, these pupils are making more rapid progress than in previous years.
- Outcomes in the wider curriculum, including in Islamic studies and Arabic, are generally strong.
- Although pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum, they are not fully prepared for their next steps in education because outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are not yet strong enough.

School details

Unique reference number	136210
DfE registration number	852/6011
Inspection number	10033954

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	46
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Sabir Amin
Chair	Mr Sabir Amin
Headteacher	Mr Ali Rahmoune
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,400
Telephone number	02380 570 849
Website	www.fitrahschool.com
Email address	office@fitrahsips.com
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2011

Information about this school

- Fitrah Southampton Islamic Primary School is an independent day school that was set up in 2010.
- The school's mission is to 'create confident, high-achieving and ambitious individuals who look to contribute to the betterment of society'.
- Pupils are taught in three classes of Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. All current pupils are Muslim, although the school admits pupils from any faith.

- There are very few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the school.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector observed learning in all classes, in most cases accompanied by the headteacher. The inspector also observed pupils as they walked to the local park for their daily playtime and as they walked to a local youth club for their weekly physical education lesson.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and a group of teachers.
- The inspector also spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day and considered one response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector took pupils' views of the school into account by talking to a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6.
- The inspector heard pupils read and scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school, including assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour logs.
- Safeguarding arrangements were evaluated.

Inspection team

Gary Holden, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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