

Al-Muntada Islamic School

7 Bridges Place, Off Parsons Green Lane, London SW6 4HW

Inspection dates

12–14 September 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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and proprietors have not secured consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders are not sharp enough in their checks on the school's performance. The progress and attendance of different groups are not monitored carefully. Pupils' progress is not always a key focus of leaders' observations. As a result, leaders' judgements for pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are overgenerous.
- Planning for improvement lacks precision. Leaders cannot gauge the impact of their actions accurately.
- Pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in most subjects, including in writing and mathematics.
- The early years provision requires improvement.
- School leaders were unclear about the information they had regarding the names and responsibilities of the trustees.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Notable successes are pupils' stronger achievement in reading. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also strong.
- Leaders and proprietors have ensured that all the independent school standards and early years statutory requirements are met in full.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are respectful and cooperative. They are enthusiastic and focused learners.
- Pupils' welfare and safety are given a high priority by leaders and all staff. Both pupils and parents are confident in the school's ability to keep everyone safe and secure.
- Leaders and proprietors have created a team of staff who are keen to share what works well to improve their practice.

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 quality of teaching and learning so that progress rates speed up by ensuring that:
 - pupils begin to learn right from the start of the academic year
 - all teachers regularly assess pupils' ongoing learning accurately, to move their progress on quickly
 - activities are pitched at the right level of difficulty, particularly in mathematics and for the most able pupils
 - pupils solve problems in mathematics more often
 - pupils have further opportunities to write at length in literacy and in other subjects
 - pupils join up their handwriting to develop their fluency.
- Strengthen leadership further by making sure that:
 - evaluations for the quality of teaching are more realistic, focusing on what progress pupils make in a lesson and over a series of lessons
 - half-termly assessments for pupils' progress and attainment are accurate
 - the progress and attendance of different groups of pupils are scrutinised
 - improvement planning is refined to include measurable short- and long-term targets based on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Improve the early years provision by:
 - providing better resources, particularly in the outdoor area, to promote children's physical development
 - enriching children's learning by planning carefully for key skills, knowledge and understanding that are relevant, interesting and well matched to children's abilities in all activities
 - making sure that adults work with children to develop and extend their language skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and the chair of the governing body undertake a wide range of observations to check on the quality of all the main aspects of the school, including the quality of teaching, and pupils' learning and progress. This information is used to plan for further improvements.
- Leaders do not accurately judge pupils' starting points and the progress pupils make within lessons and over a series of lessons. Leaders' observations either do not measure what sort of progress pupils make, or they make a generic statement that 'pupils make steady progress'. As well as demonstrating a lack of rigour, the statement is an explicit acknowledgement that pupils do not yet make good progress. As a result, leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are inconsistent and overgenerous.
- The executive headteacher has bolstered senior leaders' capacity to secure much-needed improvements and focused on improving the quality of teaching. The deputy headteacher provides support for staff, through coaching, as does the executive headteacher.
- The executive headteacher has introduced a number of improvement strategies. These include an appraisal cycle to improve teachers' performance, linked to the teachers' standards, with regular feedback to teachers about strengths and weaknesses for the quality of their teaching. There are half-termly pupils' progress meetings to identify individual pupils' progress rates. Those pupils at risk of underachieving are identified and support is put in place to boost their progress.
- These activities, however, lack precision. The progress of different ability groups is not tracked separately. Although some of these groups are small, without this information, leaders cannot be confident that any potential inequalities in achievement are eliminated quickly.
- Similarly, the lack of accuracy in leaders' judgements for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress undermines these activities, slowing down the pace of improvements, notably in writing, mathematics and in the early years foundation stage.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's priorities, many of which reflect the same areas identified by this inspection's recommendations. Nonetheless, improvement planning lacks measurable and regular checks and targets based on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This hinders leaders' ability to measure the impact of their work precisely, or for the chair of the governing body to probe more incisively the quality of leaders' work.
- A notable improvement since the last full inspection is that leaders and proprietors have made sure that all the independent school standards and early years statutory requirements are now met.
- A further success of leaders' work is clearly demonstrated in pupils' reading progress and attainment. This is the result of investment in a new reading scheme, school and class libraries, and regular reading sessions. Likewise, the new information technology (IT) suite is paying dividends, enabling pupils to improve their coding skills and to develop their enquiry and investigative skills.

- The curriculum is well balanced. Activities secure a broad range of opportunities for pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils also learn about Islam, Arabic and the Qur'an.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced through a wide range of visits and visitors, including older pupils visiting St. Mary's University, London, to study the human biology of cells. Pupils all 'graduated' from the Imperial College, London, raising both pupils' and parents' aspirations to go on to study medicine, astronomy and law for future flourishing careers.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to be creative and experiment in science, art, drama, music, and design and technology. Pupils benefit from working with other schools, singing in choirs and entering poetry competitions. After-school clubs enrich pupils' learning well.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values are promoted well. There are a wide range of activities, including visits to different places of worship, celebrations of cultural diversity, including Black History Week and residential visits. These ensure that pupils appreciate the need for tolerance, cooperation and respect for differences between different cultures, religions and abilities.
- The Department of Education (DfE) commissioned Ofsted to consider as part of this standard inspection the school's application to make a material change to its registration, so that three-year-old children could attend the early years provision and so as to increase the number of children by 30.
- Leaders and proprietors did notify the DfE that the school started to enrol three-year-olds from October 2016, without their material change request being considered or approved by the DfE. At the time of this inspection, there were 10 three-year-old children attending the nursery provision. Leaders agreed that the school currently breaches its registration in relation to the age range and numbers of roll.

Governance

- Leaders clearly explained to inspectors that they are accountable to one trustee, who is also the head of education and called the chair of the governing body.
- However, there was a distinct lack of clarity about the names of other trustees and information about their child protection checks. It was eventually established after 24 hours that there are two other trustees, one being the chair of the trust. It was only after the inspection that leaders confirmed that the other trustee was the previous head of education for the trust. He was not a trustee at the time of the last standard inspection.
- The chair of the governing body has undertaken the appropriate training for safeguarding and safer recruitment of staff. He has also made sure that all the statutory safeguarding requirements are met, as well as the independent school standards and early years statutory requirements.
- The chair of the governing body invests considerable time working with leaders. Leaders' reports to the chair establish that he supports and challenges leaders in equal measure. His direct observations and regular reports from leaders provide him with an adequate overview of the school's priorities. However, given the overgenerous evaluations of leaders, as well as the lack of measurable targets in improvement plans, the chair is not able to question leaders effectively about the impact of their work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy includes all current statutory requirements. It is available to parents on request and is on the school's website.
- Leaders promote a strong culture of safeguarding on a day-to-day basis. They make sure that adults have an understanding of the potential risks pupils may be exposed to. Training is up to date, including how to spot the signs of radicalisation and female genital mutilation.
- The school highlights potential threats to their children's safety through timely parental workshops, including on e-safety and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable between year groups and across subjects.
- Teachers do not use previous assessments to plan work at the right level of difficulty from the moment pupils start their new class. For almost two weeks, pupils are given time to settle into their new class, where teachers check pupils' achievement. This is despite the fact that three of the year groups remain in the same class they were in in the previous year, with the same teacher. As a result, valuable learning time is wasted, slowing pupils' progress.
- Work in pupils' books confirms that some teachers assess carefully what pupils know and can do. These teachers use this information to plan pupils' next steps in their learning, building on what pupils can do effectively. This practice is not consistently applied, preventing pupils from making better progress. Too often, pupils complete activities which they can already do, rather than teachers giving these pupils harder work, especially in mathematics. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to solve problems. Pupils' learning is not deepened well enough.
- Learning is speeded up when pupils apply their numeracy skills in other subjects. Work in books confirms that pupils use their mathematical skills such as measuring and calculating in science. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply, hone and extend their writing skills in literacy and in other subjects.
- Teachers and other adults have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils usually present their work neatly. Nevertheless, pupils are not encouraged to join up their handwriting, which slows their handwriting down.
- Effective teaching and learning are evident where teachers have good subject knowledge and convey this and their enthusiasm to capture pupils' attention and interest. Teachers are often very skilled in asking pupils questions to make them think more deeply about their learning.
- All staff are very reflective about their practice and highly motivated to continue to improve. Professional discussions and sharing of what works well is an admirable strategy of the team. Indeed, teachers and leaders soak up any constructive feedback and act on it with determination and focus. The lack of accurate evaluations for the quality of teaching and learning inhibits their professional development considerably.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's learning and progress through termly newsletters and reports. The parental questionnaires confirm overwhelming support and

appreciation for the work of the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and have great respect and appreciation for everything the school offers. Small classes mean that adults know pupils very well. This enables adults to foster a caring and supportive atmosphere, and pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- A host of activities and events assist pupils to learn how to become responsible citizens. Pupils learn about democracy, through head boy, girl and school council elections. Pupils learn about the rights of different groups in society, including the sick and vulnerable. They organise a range of fundraising activities for national charities and learn how to be enterprising through recycling and selling waste.
- The school promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about appropriate relationships, risks of radicalisation, online safety and different types of bullying. There is effective guidance for pupils to stay safe outside school, through visits from the police and Transport for London.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff implement the behaviour policy consistently and effectively. They demand good behaviour and conduct from pupils, providing pupils with appropriate and timely rewards and praise.
- Pupils are motivated and keen to do their best. They remain focused on their work when activities are suitably matched to their ability.
- Pupils behave well outside lessons. They are polite and respectful and excellent ambassadors for their school.
- There is a consensus of opinion from pupils, staff and parents that behaviour is good. Behaviour logs confirm that incidents of serious misbehaviour are rare, as are any instances of bullying. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- Overall attendance is below average and particularly so for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and are rewarded for good attendance. However, leaders do not analyse attendance patterns for different groups and are, therefore, not aware of any differences in order to counter them effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Work in pupils' books demonstrates variability in the progress pupils make between classes and in different subjects. Leaders' own monitoring information also confirms inconsistent progress across the school.
- Inspectors sampled the quality of work in pupils' books for 2017. This was checked against the school's achievement information, confirming that some assessments were accurate while others were inflated.
- Work in pupils' books established that writing standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 were in line with national expectations in 2017. School assessments demonstrated that no pupils achieved in greater depth in this subject in Year 6. Conversely, the school's assessments showed that a significant proportion of Year 2 pupils achieved this standard. It was eventually established that the Year 2 results had not been externally verified.
- The school's achievement information denotes that almost one in two pupils achieved in greater depth in mathematics in Years 2 and 6 in 2017. Leaders judged attainment to be above average. Work in pupils' books in key stage 2 demonstrates insufficient opportunities for pupils to solve problems or to reason to deepen their learning. There is too much repetition of work which pupils find easy, including the most able pupils. First-hand inspection evidence found steady progress and average attainment in this subject.
- Pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable given their average starting points. The majority of children enter and leave Reception broadly in line with national expectations. Most Year 6 pupils attain average standards by the end of their time in school. This equates to progress which requires improvement.
- Although ready for their next stage of education, all pupils could achieve so much more. This is so for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those who find learning difficult and the most able pupils, particularly so in writing and mathematics.
- The acting special needs coordinator liaises closely with teachers and parents. She ensures that pupils with specific concerns are quickly identified and provided with additional support, either in class and/or with specialist agencies. This group of pupils make similar progress to all other groups.
- Pupils who read to inspectors confirmed that pupils' reading skills are developed well. Pupils read for meaning and with good comprehension. Younger pupils use their phonics knowledge effectively to read unfamiliar words. Progress in reading is stronger than in writing and mathematics.
- IT displays demonstrate that pupils have good opportunities to understand and apply key concepts, including solving problems and representing data in the new IT suite.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because leaders do not make sure that the children's learning is as good as it can be.
- Leaders do not provide enough worthwhile and exciting activities for the children. As a result, children are sometimes left with too little to do or explore.
- The outdoor play area in particular hinders children's learning. This rather stark space doubles as the school's playground. It is shared with all other classes. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have few opportunities to learn a range of skills. Children do not build

strong physical skills, for example by climbing, balancing or digging.

- Activities, both indoors and outdoors, are not stimulating enough. Adults often expect too little from the children. The school's measures of children's progress show that most make steady but not rapid progress in acquiring language, number and physical skills.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a safe, nurturing environment. Adults are caring and attentive to children's needs. Leaders have thought carefully about the needs of younger children. They have redesigned the accommodation to include a large classroom, with an area for children to take a nap and/or have some quiet time.
- Adults recognise that children's safety and well-being are of paramount importance. Two adults are paediatric first aid trained. Staff are qualified and experienced. Procedures for administering medicine are tight. Children are well supervised.
- Adults make sure that children who are at an early stage of learning English receive support and resources that enable them to catch up quickly.
- Adults are attentive to children who have or might develop special educational needs and/or disabilities. Together with the school's special needs coordinator, adults identify the children's needs. They work effectively with external agencies to support the children.
- There are effective links between school and home. The school communicates well with parents. Good partnerships mean that children's needs, such as any medical conditions, are handled well. The school keeps parents informed about how well the children are learning.
- The school is a close community, where each child is known and cared for. As a result of effective transition arrangements, children are ready to move confidently into the Year 1/2 class.
- The early years provision meets all the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage and ensures that children are ready to start Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	100372
DfE registration number	205/6382
Inspection number	10035773

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	Islamic day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Al Muntada Al Islami Trust
Chair	Abdullah Al Faiz
Executive Headteacher	Amjad Malik
Headteacher	Ziad Chehimi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,000
Telephone number	020 7471 8283
Website	www.almuntadaschool.org
Email address	headteacher@almuntadaschool.org
Date of previous inspection	13 January 2015

Information about this school

- Al-Muntada Islamic School is an independent day school for boys and girls of Islamic faith, aged from four to 11 years. It was founded in 1989 by the Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust.
- The school is registered for pupils between 4 and 11 years of age. The proprietors requested a material change to expand the early years provision to include three-year-olds and to increase capacity by 30 children. This material change request was considered as part of this inspection.

- The secondary provision closed in July 2014.
- The primary school, which includes a Nursery and Reception class, is located in the same building as the headquarters of the Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust in Parsons Green. It is used outside school hours for other community activities.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Many are bilingual and currently only a few are at the early stages of learning English. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs and none of the children in the early years receive government funding.
- The overall aim for the school is 'to provide an outstanding academic and Islamic education, aiming to create an encouraging atmosphere for Muslim children to realise their full potential'.
- Since the last standard inspection, there have been a number of staffing changes, including the appointment of an executive headteacher and an internal appointment of a new deputy headteacher. Currently, the executive headteacher's post is being advertised.
- The school's last full inspection took place in May 2014 when the school's overall effectiveness was found to be inadequate. A significant number of independent school standards were not met. A follow-up monitoring inspection in January 2015, to check the school's progress in meeting those unmet standards, established that all the independent school standards were now met in full as were the statutory regulations for the early years.
- It is recommended that the early years provision may cater for three-year-old children and that capacity is increased by 30.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day's notice.
- Inspectors visited all classes at least once. Many observations were undertaken with a leader.
- Meetings took place with leaders, pupils and staff. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors examined pupils' work, the school's achievement information and a range of documentation including policies, risk assessments, schemes of work and staff training records.
- The inspectors considered 11 staff questionnaires and 19 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Pupils were not given the opportunity to complete Ofsted's online Point-in-Time survey.
- At the request of the DfE, a material change for the early years provision was considered as part of the inspection to review the age and number of children who could be taught.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Natalia Power

Ofsted Inspector

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