

# Al-Furqaan Preparatory School

Drill Hall House, Bath Street, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF13 2JR

## Inspection dates

19–21 June 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders have failed to ensure that the independent school standards are met.
- Currently, boys and girls are educated separately in Years 5 and 6 for mathematics and English. Leaders accept that this is unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 and plan to amalgamate the classes in September 2018.
- Trustees and leaders are not as effective as they should be at monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection has been too slow.
- Pupils make better progress in mathematics and writing than in reading. Leaders have put in place a range of strategies to develop pupils' reading skills. However, improvement remains stubbornly slow and is reflected in outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers' planned work does not always meet the needs of pupils as accurately as it should. Often, the most able pupils are not given work that stretches and challenges them. This slows their progress overall.
- Pupils' attendance is too low. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance termly. Some pupils' persistent absences remain unquestioned for too long.
- The curriculum meets current requirements. However, pupils' progress in some subject areas is slower than it should be. This is because planned learning does not use pupils' previous learning as a starting point.
- Leaders and governors have not put in place an effective accessibility plan. Therefore, it was not possible to establish how the school intends to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 going forward.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' and governors' development plan recognises that more needs to be done to improve reading across the school.
- Children in early years get off to a good start due to the strong teaching they receive.
- Pupils say that they feel happy and safe when they come to school. Their behaviour is often exemplary.
- The new leadership team is enthusiastic to bring about change and improvement.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that all the independent school standards are met
  - ensuring that planned actions to end the school’s unlawful discriminatory practice of segregating older pupils by gender continue to be carried out (although not taken into account in this inspection when determining judgements, this will be taken into account from September 2018: see ‘Information about this school’ section of this report)
  - taking urgent and effective action to produce an up-to-date accessibility plan for the school
  - putting into place a more robust system for tracking pupils’ levels of absence
  - increasing the level of accuracy in the monitoring of teaching and learning so that strengths and weaknesses are recognised and acted upon
  - making sure that the planned curriculum enables pupils to make good progress from year to year in all subject areas.
- Increase the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve pupils’ outcomes by:
  - making sure that work set matches the needs of individual pupils more accurately
  - ensuring that planned work for the most able pupils offers them sufficient stretch and challenge
  - more accurately analysing what is needed to improve pupils’ reading skills across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The proprietor, governors and school leadership team have not ensured that all the independent school standards have been met. There are a number of unmet standards relating to the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management.
- At the time of the inspection, school leaders were unable to produce an up-to-date accessibility plan. As a result, leaders were not able to demonstrate how the school is meeting the requirements of section 3 of the Equalities Act 2010.
- School leaders are currently continuing the discriminatory practice of segregating boys and girls for English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. School leaders, governors and the proprietor were aware that this practice is unlawful before the start of the inspection. Leaders are beginning to take action to stop this practice. For example, pupils are no longer segregated in the afternoons. Parents spoken to during the inspection confirmed that they had been informed that from September 2018, pupils will no longer be segregated. This practice was not taken into account when reaching the judgements at this inspection.
- Leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning. However, they do not always identify with sufficient clarity what is required to bring about improvement. Too often, monitoring focuses on, for example, the organisation in the classroom, and too little on actual learning. This has slowed improvement to teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
- The school offers pupils a broad and balanced curriculum. However, in some subject areas, for example the study of Arabic, planned learning does not always build upon previous learning because some activities are repeated. This slows pupils' progress over time.
- Currently, school leaders carry out checks on pupils' attendance at termly intervals. Where pupils are absent for more than five days in a term, parents are invited into school to discuss the absence of their child. Parents are also asked to sign a contract promising that they will ensure that their child's attendance increases. However, a scrutiny of the school's attendance registers showed that a small but significant number of children had high levels of absence, particularly in key stage 1. Leaders are aware that the current system needs further adjustment, but have yet to take action to bring about improvement.
- The recently formed leadership team is enthusiastic and is passionate about bringing about improvement in school. For example, the school development plan rightly identifies most of the key targets and actions needed to ensure improvement. Leaders are beginning to have a stronger understanding of how to bring about improvements, but the impact of their efforts has yet to be seen.
- Pupils who attend the school take national tests at the end of key stage 2 and are assessed against national standards at the end of key stage 1. Results from national tests at the end of Year 6 last year showed that pupils attained higher standards than others nationally in mathematics and attained similar standards to the national average in writing. However, pupils attained lower scores in reading than their peers nationally.

Leaders are aware of the need for improvement, but current school data suggests that pupils' reading skills are still behind those in writing and mathematics.

- The school curriculum offers pupils a wide range of different activities which help develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, at the time of the inspection, younger pupils visited a local farm, which enabled them to learn about where food comes from and how to conserve the countryside. This, coupled with visits from members of Parliament and local councillors, enables pupils to understand the democratic process within the United Kingdom and ensure that they develop an understanding of British values.

## **Governance**

- The current proprietor joined the school in a governance role soon after it opened in 1996. The longevity of his service has allowed him to develop an understanding of the needs of the school.
- The current governing body is made up of four governors, including the proprietor. A recent addition to the governors is a parent governor, who works within social care and has a clear understanding of the safeguarding challenges within the area.
- Governors' range of skills and knowledge enables them to challenge senior leaders in most areas. For example, they ensure the financial propriety of the school. Governors' understanding of pupils' progress is less strong than in other areas. As a result, improvement in pupils' outcomes has been slower than it could have been since the previous inspection.
- Governors failed to inform the Department for Education that they had five more pupils on roll than the school is currently registered for. This is a breach of registration requirements.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that all safer recruitment checks are carried out in a timely manner for staff. Staff files are orderly and are regularly updated.
- Staff receive regular training and are clear about what to do should pupils raise concerns with them. They are clear that safeguarding pupils is a key priority within the school.
- Child protection files scrutinised during the inspection showed that the designated safeguarding lead has worked closely with other agencies to ensure the welfare and safety of pupils in his care.
- Staff meet and greet parents at the start and finish of the school day. This enables parents to gain information about how the school day has been for their child, as well as ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils.

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

## **Requires improvement**

- Boys and girls in Years 5 and 6 are segregated when they are taught mathematics and English. Girls and boys follow the same curriculum and achieve to a similar standard.

School leaders are aware that segregating by sex is discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 in the absence of a legal justification. School leaders are taking steps to cease the practice from September 2018.

- Staff do not always use information relating to pupils' previous learning to plan future learning. As a result, activities chosen do not always match the needs of individual pupils as closely as they could. This reduces the speed and depth at which pupils learn, and slows their progress.
- Most-able pupils do not make as much progress as they could. This is because their specific needs are not always recognised by staff. For example, a register is kept of pupils with additional needs. They are often set more challenging homework in order to accelerate their progress. However, often in class, they are given the same work as other pupils without extended challenge. Work in books, looked at during the inspection, confirmed that when this happens, progress slows for these pupils.
- Pupils made slower progress in reading than in writing and mathematics last year. Staff have put in place a range of different strategies to improve pupils' reading skills. For example, staff have put on training sessions for parents in order to help them to support their children's reading. Daily reading sessions take place in all classes in school. Despite these strategies, improvement in reading remains stubbornly slow. This is due in part to a lack of understanding by some staff of the processes involved in learning to read. Leaders are planning further staff training to improve staff knowledge and skills, but as yet this has not happened.
- Staff work very closely together as a team in each classroom. They offer effective support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils respect staff and are keen to learn. Their behaviour in the classroom is at times exemplary, particularly when the work set interests and engages them.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils spoken to say that they feel safe and well cared for in school. They demonstrate respect for each other, staff and visitors both inside and outside the classroom.
- Pupils nearly always listen attentively in lessons and show mature attitudes when giving and receiving feedback with peers in lessons.
- The school provides pupils with many and varied opportunities to develop their understanding of wider British society. Pupils have the opportunity to visit a range of different locations, including the local mining museum and play facilities. Themed days and weeks, including the International Day of Peace, anti-bullying week, poetry competition day, and international hijab day, enable pupils to develop and deepen their levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and self-esteem.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- Behaviour requires improvement because pupils do not always attend school as often as they should, and nor do they always arrive at school on time. A higher than average level of absence and a lack of punctuality have an impact on the learning and progress made by some pupils.
- Pupils' attendance overall is lower than that in other primary schools nationally. On the day of the inspection, attendance stood at just 93%. Overall attendance last year was 94.6% and current attendance for this year is 95%. School leaders are aware that systems in place to monitor pupils' attendance need to be tightened up, but do not have firm plans in place for future improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is often very good, with little low-level disruption seen in lessons. At breaktime, pupils play happily together and respond quickly and calmly when asked to return to the classroom.
- School leaders confirm that they have not had need to exclude a pupil in the last three years. Incidents are recorded in the sanctions book, but because there are few issues, there are currently no entries.
- Pupils are nearly always smartly dressed and wear their uniform with pride.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils make inconsistent progress overall. Last year's results from national tests showed that key stage 2 pupils made stronger progress and reached higher standards in mathematics and writing than in reading.
- In key stage 1, pupils' progress in reading was also less than in writing or mathematics.
- Current data shows that pupils are still not making as strong progress in reading as in other areas. School leaders have encouraged pupils to read more often by increasing the numbers of books in the school's library. Leaders have also introduced a system to ensure that pupils read at home every night, as well as offering training to parents on how to support their children's reading. However, they have not yet carried out sufficient analysis of what it is that is slowing pupils' progress in reading. For example, leaders are unsure whether pupils' comprehension skills need to be improved or whether their vocabulary is not sufficiently wide. Leaders accept that more work is needed to bring about improvement overall.
- The progress of the most able pupils is not monitored as robustly as it could be. This group of pupils are identified, but work in their books shows that they are not always offered sufficiently challenging tasks and this slows their progress.
- Pupils' progress in subjects other than mathematics and English is not as carefully tracked and monitored. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils make stronger progress in science than in history or geography. Leaders have plans in place to improve the monitoring in other subject areas from the start of next term.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Parents agree that their children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. Parents feel that staff are skilled and caring and support both the educational and social and emotional needs of their children.
- The early years leader has a clear understanding of the needs of children who attend the unit and has put in place a wide range of learning opportunities that meet the needs of all pupils.
- The skilful use of the relatively small area outside the unit enables children to make good progress in physical development. Trips to local play areas develop this even further.
- Children's development is carefully assessed soon after they arrive in the Nursery or Reception classes. School data shows that most arrive with skills and knowledge a little below those of their peers nationally, particularly in the development of speaking and listening skills.
- A greater proportion than the national average leave at the end of Reception having reached the early learning goals. This represents good progress over time. As a result, children are well prepared when they join Year 1.
- Staff regularly observe children learning and record their observations in children's learning journeys. These observations are made by all staff members and are well written, demonstrating clear links between children's progress and the early years areas of learning.
- Welfare standards are effectively met and children feel safe and well cared for. They are clear how to stay safe, for example when pedalling fast in a small area.



## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 131131   |
| DfE registration number | 382/6019 |
| Inspection number       | 10043654 |

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 | 146  |
| Number of part-time pupils          | 44   |
| Proprietor                          | Mr Yusuf Bham  |
| Chair                               | Mr Yusuf Bham  |
| Headteacher                         | Bilal Aswat  |
| Annual fees (day pupils)            | £1,000   |
| Telephone number                    | 01924 453661   |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.alfurqaanschool.org">www.alfurqaanschool.org</a>   |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:info@alfurqaanschool.org">info@alfurqaanschool.org</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 19–21 January 2016   |

## Information about this school

- Al-Furqaan Preparatory School is a small independent school for children between the ages of three and 11. It also has a 27-place nursery on site.
- The school is not registered as having a religious character but has an Islamic ethos.
- The school is registered for 142 pupils. At the time of the inspection, there were 147 pupils on roll. School leaders had not informed the Department for Education of this change in numbers of pupils.
- The school serves the local community of Dewsbury in West Yorkshire.

- The school does not use alternative provision for any of its pupils.
- Currently, pupils are segregated by sex in Year 5 and Year 6 for lessons in mathematics and English lessons in the mornings. Until recently, pupils were segregated by sex for all lessons but not at other times in the school day. Leaders plan that pupils will be fully integrated by September 2018 and segregation by sex will cease.
- This policy of segregating pupils by sex causes detriment to pupils as they are denied the opportunity to be educated alongside others of the opposite sex. In 2017, the Court of Appeal affirmed that strict segregation by sex in schools is a direct discrimination contrary to the Equality Act 2010. Following this judgement, the Secretary of State for Education has stated that schools that segregate by sex should be given time to cease the practice. Therefore, the school's policy on segregation has not been taken into account in this inspection when determining the judgements. We intend to write to the Secretary of State and to suggest that he commission a further inspection of the school in or after September 2018. Following September 2018, Ofsted will take any ongoing breach of the Equality Act 2010 arising from segregation into account in relation to key inspection judgements made.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all areas of the school.
- Meetings were held with staff, leaders, governors, the proprietor and pupils. Informal discussions were held with two parents.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including safeguarding documents, teachers' planning, and health and safety documents.
- There were 10 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. These, alongside 22 responses from members of staff, were taken into consideration by the inspection team when making inspection judgements.

## Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philippa Darley

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
  - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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