

Avicenna Academy

Tinsley Park Road, Darnall, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S9 5DL

Inspection dates

25–27 September 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders ensure that the school complies with the independent school standards. During the inspection, a new medical room was constructed to ensure compliance.
- Teachers plan and assess learning well. Most learning challenges pupils appropriately. Leaders agree that systems and strategies for teaching phonics and spellings could be further improved.
- Leaders ensure that they evaluate the quality of education at the school. This is mainly based on outcomes. Systems for evaluating the effect of actions taken and for quality assuring are not sufficiently developed.
- As a result of leaders' actions, pupils make good and better progress across the curriculum. Assessed outcomes at key stages 1, 2 and 4 are impressive.
- Leaders have updated the primary and secondary curriculum in line with changes to GCSE qualifications. Leaders develop the early years curriculum in line with children's interests.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They conduct themselves exceptionally well throughout the school day. Pupils are very keen to learn and, consequently, they achieve highly.
- Through a carefully planned curriculum for citizenship and personal, social, health and economic education, pupils learn about facing risks and keeping themselves safe. For example, younger pupils are very keen to talk about how to cross the road safely.
- Destinations of pupils who leave at the end of Year 11 are very impressive. All pupils progress to further education to study qualifications appropriate to their career aspirations. Current pupils value the careers education that they receive highly.
- In the early years, children achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. However, leaders' initial assessments of children's abilities are not as accurate as they could be. Leaders say that the outdoor provision will be improved.

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 leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders and governors regularly review the effect of actions taken to improve the school
 - further developing processes for quality assurance, particularly in monitoring teaching and learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - increasing opportunities for teachers to share good practice and learn from other schools, particularly in the early years and the primary school
 - ensuring a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, spelling and expectations for presentation.
- Improve the quality of the early years provision by:
 - developing more accurate baseline assessments of what children can do when they join the school
 - improving the opportunities for children to learn outside.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- At the beginning of the inspection, leaders informed the inspection team that the school was segregating pupils by gender in Year 8 and Year 9. During the inspection, the headteacher held a meeting with parents and it was agreed that the school would no longer segregate. Boys and girls of all ages are now taught together at the school.
- The headteacher has very high aspirations for all pupils at the school. He knows pupils well. Staff and pupils say that he is approachable and listens to what they have to say.
- Leaders ensure that pupils prepare well for life in modern Britain. Appropriate curriculum plans are in place to ensure that pupils learn about British values, alongside developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are keen to talk about their future ambitions.
- An appropriate careers programme is in place. Pupils find out about different careers in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons. Pupils in the secondary school have a one-to-one careers interview. Evidence from these meetings shows that pupils consider a wide range of careers. Pupils in Year 11 undertake work experience in the school. These pupils say that it helps them to prepare for the world of work.
- There are opportunities for extra-curricular activities, for example, with visits to museums to support the art and history curriculum, visits to science centres and visits to different places of worship. Pupils also take part in after-school football, cricket and cooking.
- Staff are positive and happy to be at the school. One member of staff said, 'This school is well-led and managed because there is plenty of support available, strong leadership from the headteacher and the school is maintained well.'
- The headteacher carries out some checks on the quality of teaching and learning at the school. From his findings, professional development opportunities are put into place to address any weaknesses in teaching. Teachers value these opportunities but say that there are few opportunities to work with staff in other schools.
- Leaders review the curriculum in line with national changes. For example, when GCSE examinations changed, both the primary and secondary curriculum were reviewed to ensure that the highest expectations were in place. In the early years, children take part in activities in line with their interests. However, opportunities are missed to more regularly refresh the activities available for the children to choose from, so that they have a greater variety of choice in their learning.
- Leaders ensure that the school meets the independent school standards. During the inspection, the headteacher and chair of the governing body took swift action to change the location of the medical room to ensure these standards were met.

Governance

- Governors and leaders work very closely together as most are also employed to work at the school.
- Governors receive regular updates and meet frequently to discuss the school. They are

aware of pupils' progress and receive a report from the headteacher each term.

- Governors ask some questions, but minutes from meetings show that they do not always discuss or plan effectively for strategic development of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding leaders work with Sheffield Local Safeguarding Children Board when appropriate.
- The safeguarding policy, recently updated with the latest government guidance, is available to parents on request. Leaders intend to make it available on the school's website when the transition from the old website to the new website is complete.
- Leaders ensure that staff have appropriate training. The designated safeguarding lead and the deputy designated safeguarding lead are knowledgeable. They ensure that staff also receive regular training and know what to do should they have a concern about a pupil. All staff have training to support pupils who may be vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism.
- There is a first aid and administration of medication policy in place. Almost all staff have a first aid qualification. During the inspection, some staff received further paediatric first aid training to ensure that the early years safeguarding welfare requirements are met.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and that they have a trusted adult to speak to if they are concerned or worried about themselves or their peers.
- Safeguarding records are in place and stored securely. There is an appropriate risk assessment policy, and risk assessments are in place to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan lessons effectively, taking into account what pupils can and cannot do. Lesson time is used well and transitions between lessons are smooth. Teachers strong subject knowledge, particularly in key stage 3 and key stage 4, ensures that pupils can learn a lot.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' questioning. Most teachers ask questions which challenge pupils to think hard about the topic.
- Positive attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour in class ensure that pupils can concentrate on the tasks without disruption. Consequently, pupils make good progress.
- Homework is set regularly. Pupils say that the homework relates to what they have been learning and helps them to fully understand the topics.
- Assessments take place regularly in all year groups across the school. This allows leaders and teachers to identify what pupils can do. Teachers use this information to plan further learning. In the early years, learning logs are used purposefully by teachers and teaching assistants for tracking children's progress.
- Teachers encourage pupils to work hard. Pupils are keen to do their best possible work. However, some pupils do not always take enough care with their presentation.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the

curriculum. However, leaders agree that further opportunities for extended writing and practising spelling, and a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, would support pupils to make even better progress.

- In the early years, children make good progress, but their access to opportunities to learn outside is limited.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident in their learning. They ask questions if they need additional support, and they take on challenges with a thoughtful approach. Children in the early years enjoy talking and telling visitors about their learning.
- Pupils, parents and school staff say that bullying is rare. Pupils say that they all get on very well and, if there is a problem, staff intervene quickly so that the situation does not escalate. Pupils are confident that they have a member of staff who they can speak to if they need support.
- Through an effective programme of PSHE education, alongside Islamic studies, teachers teach pupils about staying safe, and they learn how to face risks. Pupils talk confidently about their future aspirations and their part in a modern British society.
- Pupils, especially those in the primary school, are very proud of the rewards system. They say that it helps them to focus, and they are very proud when they receive a nomination for pupil of the day or week. Pupils enjoy the reward trips that they attend.
- Pupils receive effective careers guidance. This is in place in various parts of the school curriculum. In addition, older pupils receive one-to-one careers advice, which ensures that they learn about a broad range of different careers. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in work experience in the school.
- Girls and boys in Years 8 and 9 have previously been segregated by gender and have not had opportunities to work alongside each other and benefit from learning from one another. Leaders recent actions to stop segregation will enable positive peer relationships to form.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are extremely polite and respectful and conduct themselves exceptionally well during the day. In lessons, pupils are very keen to learn and to do well.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and are very happy. Pupils are very proud of the school. The learning environment is bright and there are a large variety of displays of pupils' work.
- Pupils are self-disciplined and say that there is very little disruption to their learning. Staff deal with any issues quickly.
- School leaders' high expectations and aspirations for behaviour are clear. Pupils meet

their expectations and, consequently, the school is a hardworking place.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make excellent progress in their GCSE courses in most subjects across the curriculum. They achieve particularly well in English and mathematics. Pupils leave the school with high grades and secure places in further education.
- By the end of Reception year, all pupils achieve a good level of development, and some pupils exceed the early learning goals.
- Pupils achieve very well in key stage 1 and key stage 2 tests. Work in books shows that pupils make good progress across the curriculum. In the primary school, progress in mathematics is strong.
- Pupils in key stage 3 make good progress in their learning. Work in books demonstrates that the majority are on track to achieve highly at the end of key stage 4.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and they read well. Books are available in classrooms and in the hall area. All pupils have a reading book that they read in school and at home. Pupils can talk about the book that they are reading and can explain why they have chosen it.
- In the early years, leaders do not always assess children's skills and abilities on entry to the school accurately enough. They agree that this is an area to develop further.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140479 |
| DfE registration number | 373/6004 |
| Inspection number | 10040145 |

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.

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| 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 | 92 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Sulaiman Ahmed |
| Chair | Rouf Ditta |
| Headteacher | Sulaiman Ahmed |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £1400–£1900 |
| Telephone number | 0114 221 7010 |
| Website | www.avicennaacademy.com |
| Email address | info@avicennaacademy.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 2 December 2014 |

Information about this school

- Avicenna Academy is a Muslim independent day school for girls and boys aged between four and 16 years old. It is situated in the Darnall area of Sheffield.
- The previous standard inspection took place from 2 to 4 December 2014.
- The school is registered to admit up to 240 pupils. There are no pupils in Year 7 or Year 10 currently.
- At the beginning of this inspection, the school was segregating pupils in Year 8 and Year 9. By the end of the inspection, leaders had taken appropriate action to cease

segregation, following the recent change in the law.

- There are no pupils who have an education, health and care plan on roll.
- No pupils at the school speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days with one day of notice.
- The inspectors toured the school building inside and out.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning, met with leaders, the chair of the governing body, staff and parents. Inspectors met with pupils both formally and informally.
- Inspectors reviewed the work in a number of pupils' workbooks.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school was observed.
- Inspectors evaluated a wide range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school and compliance with the independent school standards. They evaluated admissions and attendance registers, policies, minutes from governors' meetings, monitoring information, child protection policies and safeguarding information. Inspectors also looked closely at progress information provided by the school and all other documents as required as part of the independent school standards.
- Inspectors took into account three free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Nine responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michele Costello

Her Majesty's Inspector

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