

Al-Ashraf Primary School

Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, Stratton Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL1 4HB

Inspection date

17 December 2018

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a)

- Since the start of the current academic year, a number of new teachers have been appointed at the school. Most are newly qualified teachers. These teachers receive good support from leaders and attend training, arranged by the school, that is provided by the local authority. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across subjects and year groups due to the developing nature of the staffing team. Therefore, some pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Current work in pupils' books demonstrates that spelling and handwriting are weaker aspects of written work. In Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. However, this understanding is not as clear for pupils in other year groups. In Year 6, pupils apply their number facts to solve mathematical problems. However, this approach is not implemented consistently across the school. In other year groups, there is insufficient challenge provided for pupils in their work.
- Leaders are working to improve the strategy to support pupils who need extra help to enable them to make good progress. The proprietor has ensured that additional teaching assistant time is available to support pupils. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' progress. The school implements an individual 'My Plan' for pupils who need to catch up with their learning. Currently, these plans do not have specific areas of learning for pupils to improve or a description of strategies to support pupils. Pupils' books show that some work does not match the needs of lower-ability pupils. Therefore, these pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- This standard is not met.

Paragraph 3, 3(f)

- The proprietor has ensured that high-quality resources, for example to support reading and mathematics, have been put in place and are available for pupils in their classrooms.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The proprietor ensures that safeguarding practices and procedures are reviewed and improved. As a result, safeguarding is effective.
- On taking up his post in September 2018, the headteacher assessed the safety of pupils while at school. He acted swiftly to make effective changes to improve pupils' safety. For example, the school day has been reorganised so that there are fewer pupils playing outside during lunchtime. Leaders' analysis of the difference this has made confirms that accidents and incidents during the lunchtime break have markedly reduced. Pupils notice the difference. They say that the school is calmer and that pupils move around the school in an orderly way.
- The designated lead for safeguarding arranges appropriate safeguarding training for staff. Comprehensive and extended induction safeguarding training for all staff took place at the start of the year.
- The designated lead for safeguarding seeks advice from other agencies and acts on any advice given in a timely way. Staff understand their responsibilities about keeping pupils safe. For example, they know how to report any concerns they may have.
- Leaders have ensured that recruitment arrangements meet requirements.
- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is compliant with the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State, 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2018. This policy, and other policies related to keeping children safe, are placed on the school's website and are available for parents and carers.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met.

Paragraph 12

- There are robust systems in place to check that fire equipment and procedures meet requirements. Pupils practise evacuating the building each school term. Leaders analyse these events and make improvements each time. Procedures such as testing the fire bell are rigorous and consistent. As seen in other aspects of the maintenance of the building, fire equipment is checked and maintained appropriately. The school meets the requirements of the fire regulations.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Since taking up post, the headteacher has made improvements to the system for assessing possible risks to pupils' welfare, health and safety while at school. For example, leaders check the premises carefully and make changes to minimise risk to pupils.
- Leaders have also reviewed their systems to assess risks when preparing for activities and trips that occur outside of school. There are significant improvements to the writing and checking of risk assessments. Risk assessments now include details about possible risks presented to pupils' safety that are specific to each visit. Leaders expect staff to visit sites that pupils visit prior to the trip to be able to assess potential risks. Leaders continue to work with staff, many of whom are new to the school, to embed

their systems further.

- Leaders have ensured that the standards within these paragraphs are met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- Over recent months, the proprietor has ensured that there are improvements to the school premises and facilities. Classrooms and other areas are now clean, warm and well maintained. Leaders are vigilant to make sure that the premises and facilities are well kept and that pupils' welfare, health and safety are maintained.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- The proprietor has taken action to improve the leadership and management at the school. The new headteacher brings a wealth of experience to the role and has, quite rightly, set about creating a strong culture of safeguarding and promotion of pupils' welfare as priorities. He is also determined to make the changes needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and has set out a vision for creating 'our great expectations at Al-Ashraf Primary School'. Leaders are in the process of drawing up a school improvement and action plan that demonstrates how leaders plan to improve the quality of provision and education. However, this plan is not yet in place.
- There have been changes to the governing body over recent months. Governors play an active role and are improving their understanding of how to check aspects of the school and whether the independent school standards are being met. It is too soon to see the impact of the new governance arrangements on outcomes for pupils.
- There are several new leadership roles across the school. The new leaders are clear about their responsibilities. Although arrangements for subject leaders to check the quality of education in their subjects are emerging, it is too soon to see the impact of this work on the progress that pupils make. Being so new to their roles, subject leaders do not yet have the skills and knowledge needed to ensure that standards related to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are met.
- The standards 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) in this part are not met.
- The proprietor, governors and senior leaders are determined that improvements are made, and continue to be made, so that the school provides a safe place for pupils to learn and that their well-being is nurtured. For example, leaders insist that pupils eat healthy snacks while at school and provide guidance to parents to help them support their children with this aspect of being healthy. The school's work to develop and implement their risk assessment systems continue to be embedded.
- Leaders have ensured that the standard 34(1)(c) is met.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Safeguarding and welfare requirements

- The proprietor has implemented changes to staff and to the organisation across the early years classes. Since January 2018, the leader from the Nursery provision has overseen the Reception and Nursery classes. Leaders have a strong understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements. They ensure that children are kept safe from hazards such as chemicals or medicines and that these are stored securely.
- The environment for children in the Reception class has significantly improved. For example, there is new flooring throughout and storage areas are sectioned off. Access for visitors arriving to sign in have also been changed to ensure children's safety.
- Leaders have ensured that these requirements are met.

Learning and development requirements

- Recent changes to the organisation of the early years classes involve staff across the Nursery and Reception classes working in close partnership to plan learning and to assess the progress that children make. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these changes on the progress that children make in the Reception class.
- This requirement is not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	135097
DfE registration number	916/6081
Inspection number	10082470

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al-Madani Educational Trust
Chair	Usman Tilly
Headteacher	Zahid Aziz
Annual fees (day pupils)	£875–£1,225
Telephone number	01452 503533
Website	primary.al-ashraf.org.uk
Email address	info@al-ashraf.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	14–16 November 2017

Information about this school

- Al-Ashraf Primary School opened in 2006. It is an independent Muslim day school for boys and girls aged from two to 11 years.
- The school is operated by the Al-Madani Education Trust, a registered charity that provides educational help and local support in Gloucestershire. The trustees have delegated governance of the school to the governing body.
- A new headteacher took up the role in September 2018. The trust has also appointed an education adviser to work in partnership with the headteacher to improve the quality of education provided.

- The school is located in the Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, a three-storey building close to the centre of Gloucester. Most pupils are from Indian, Bangladeshi or Pakistani backgrounds, with smaller numbers from a range of different backgrounds.
- The school aims to provide national curriculum-based education in keeping with Islamic morals and ethics. Currently, there are 170 boys and girls on roll, which includes children in the Nursery classes.
- In September 2018, four newly qualified teachers were appointed. They are supported with training and events, arranged by the school, that are provided by the local authority.
- The school was judged to be inadequate at the previous standard inspection in November 2017. The school's action plan submitted to the Department for Education and evaluated by Ofsted in March 2018 was found to be not acceptable. Since this time, new leaders and staff have been appointed to improve the school's performance.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) following a complaint about the school. The complaint included matters to do with the leadership of the school, the progress that pupils make, the health and safety of the premises and the safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and education adviser. The inspector observed learning in all classes, with the headteacher. The inspector also checked the health and safety arrangements for the premises.
- The inspector spoke to pupils, including a group of pupils from Year 5, and met with a group of Year 6 pupils. The inspector also spoke to staff informally at lunchtime.
- The inspector spoke to most teachers, including subject leaders, during the visit and had a meeting with the newly qualified teachers. Together with subject leaders, the lead inspector scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks alongside pupils' assessment information provided by the school.
- A meeting took place with the designated leader and deputy designated leader for safeguarding. A range of safeguarding documents were scrutinised, including recent risk assessments and the school's single central record. The inspector spoke on the telephone to the designated officer at the local authority.
- The inspector had a meeting with the chair of governors and spoke on the telephone to a representative of the proprietor.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not 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.

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.

The school must meet the following requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

Learning and development requirements: paragraph 1.6.

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