

Al-Huda Primary School

3 Hennon Street, Bolton BL1 3EH

Inspection dates

2–4 July 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher is highly ambitious for the school. With the full support of trustees and the executive headteacher, she has maintained good-quality teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
- The proprietor and trustees support the school well. Together with senior leaders they make sure that safeguarding procedures are adhered to and all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders aim for the school to be outstanding in all respects. However, the school's development plans do not state clearly what the school needs to do to improve further.
- Phonics teaching is highly effective. For the last two years, an above-average proportion of pupils has been secure at the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have strong bonds with pupils and high expectations of them. Occasionally pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their learning. In addition, pupils' information, communication and technology (ICT) skills are not as strong as they could be.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are highly respectful and studious learners, who have a strong sense of moral obligation. Pupils enjoy learning with their friends and rarely miss a day of school.
- Senior leaders' work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and appreciation of British values is highly effective.
- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils attain highly at the end of both key stages 1 and 2.
- Most parents and carers are highly positive about all aspects of their children's education. Almost all are of the view that their children are happy, safe and making good progress.
- At the end of the Reception Year in 2018, the proportion of children who attained a good level of development was above average. However, the leadership of the early years provision lacks coordination.

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 by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, especially the most able, are challenged to achieve to their absolute best
 - enabling pupils to develop and refine their ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that school development plans clearly indicate the school strengths as well as what it needs to do to improve further
 - creating clear lines of responsibility for the leadership and management of the early years provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- During her short tenure, the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has ensured that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement continue to be good. With senior leaders, and the full backing of the proprietor, trustees and the executive headteacher, the headteacher has successfully managed a period of staffing instability.
- The prompt and effective actions of senior leaders have ensured that Al-Huda Primary School is a place where staff morale is high, pupils' engagement in learning is strong and most parents are happy with their children's education.
- The proprietor and senior leaders work very effectively with staff to ensure that all the independent school standards are met, and all statutory safeguarding requirements are adhered to.
- The headteacher and consultants regularly check teachers' practice. In addition, new procedures have been introduced to ensure that teachers benefit from good advice and good practice from other schools. The quality of work in pupils' books and teachers' planning are regularly scrutinised. Feedback given to teachers is clear and focused, helping them to improve their effectiveness. All staff are set challenging improvement targets, all of which are linked to raising pupils' achievement.
- Most staff are new to the school since the previous inspection. All teachers who met with the inspector and completed the inspection questionnaire indicated their appreciation of the training and development they receive from senior leaders in Al-Huda and other schools. Typically, teachers said that they were proud to work at the school, where leaders value their opinions and keep them well informed about developments in teaching and learning.
- Pupils benefit from an exciting curriculum which develops their reading, writing and mathematical skills well across all subjects. Teachers nurture pupils' enquiring minds and ensure that time is available for pupils to research various topics of interest. However, some pupils' ICT skills are poorly developed. Few pupils on roll have the coding and programming skills expected for their age.
- Leaders' work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural appreciation is good. Pupils have a strong knowledge of other religions and have visited various places of worship, including churches. Pupils are familiar with the basic tenants of Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism and have a strong knowledge and appreciation of Islam, the principles of which guide their learning and personal and social development. Pupils enjoy Arabic, history, geography, Islamic studies, art and visiting museums and local places of interest.
- Pupils engage in random acts of kindness and deliver gifts to local people during Ramadhan. They also volunteer to pick up litter in the local community and are active citizens, who visit the elderly and donate food to local food banks. Pupils have an exceptionally strong sense of moral obligation, as demonstrated in their fundraising activities, undertaken to support various good causes. Pupils are keen on, and conversant with, democratic principles. These they put into practice as school council members. In various positions of responsibility, pupils understand they must be of good character and should abide by rules.

- Parents and carers were keen to share their views about the school during the inspection, as indicated by the exceptionally high number of responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the many text messages, letters and emails received. A very small minority of parents expressed concern about pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching and related issues. Inspection evidence indicates that the headteacher, senior leaders and teachers have taken appropriate action, including holding a well-attended forum for parents, to allay concerns. Evidence also indicates that children are happy, safe and making good progress.
- Typically, parents commented that the school blends secular and spiritual knowledge very well. They regard teachers as hard-working and 'a fantastic team'. They said that they have had a lot of positive feedback from other parents.
- The school receives advice and support from the executive headteacher of Al-Huda Trust. In addition, the headteacher has enlisted the support of education consultants. Consultants have been highly effective in working with the school in several different areas. They are mentoring the headteacher, supporting teachers to ensure their smooth transition into the school and supporting leaders in monitoring and assessing the quality of teaching. In addition, consultants work closely with school staff to strengthen parents' engagement in school life.

Governance

- The proprietor, trustees and the executive headteacher are highly committed to the school. They are determined to ensure that pupils realise their academic potential and develop into capable and caring citizens.
- The proprietor has worked closely with the school to resolve most of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. Most notably, the school has developed the outdoor learning and play areas, which has helped pupils and children in the early years to make better gains in their learning. In addition, proprietors have invested in the school building, enlarging classrooms and furnishing the building to a high standard.
- Trustees and the executive headteacher know that the quality of teaching and learning is good, because they spend time in the school. Trustees provide strong links to the community. The imam from a local mosque, also a trustee, is readily available to offer support and guidance to senior leaders and staff.
- Trustees meet regularly and receive comprehensive reports from the headteacher and senior leaders, which include information on pupils' achievement and attendance.
- Trustees, supported by the school's consultants, are responsible for the headteacher's performance management. They set challenging targets with clear measures of success.
- The proprietor, executive headteacher and trustees are trained well in areas including safer recruitment, and on matters relating to child protection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The deputy headteacher is the main designated safeguarding

lead. In addition, other senior leaders including the headteacher have undergone specialist safeguarding training to ensure their effectiveness. All staff are familiar with the government's latest guidance on keeping children safe in education.

- Additional training, such as 'Prevent' duty training, training on managing allegations and on recognising child exploitation, has been completed by staff.
- Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of staff to ensure that they are safe to work with children. Risk assessments are in place to make sure that pupils are safe when at school and when out on educational visits.
- The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and current. It is available on the school's website and to parents on request. There is a positive culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to keep pupils safe and secure.
- Staff work well with senior leaders to minimise risks. All know exactly what to do if a pupil reports a concern. They are skilled at spotting signs of neglect and abuse.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most teachers are committed to their work, have a good understanding of pupils' skills and abilities and are well supported in their training and development by senior leaders.
- Teachers usually set challenging work for pupils. This helps to ensure that all pupils enjoy learning and engage in class. Sometimes work is not challenging enough, especially for the most able. Pupils who met with the inspector and completed the inspection questionnaire said that work was sometimes too easy. As a result, a minority of pupils do not achieve to their absolute best.
- All teachers adhere to the school's feedback and assessment policy. In accordance with the policy, they give pupils advice on their work. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils take note of teachers' advice and improve their work as a result.
- Teachers have resolved the area for improvement from the previous inspection relating to mathematics. Leaders were asked to provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving activities. This was evident in a lower key stage 2 class, where pupils were transposing data from one format to another. Pupils skilfully transferred information from tables, which summarised the frequency of boys' and girls' birthdays over a calendar year, and accurately presented their findings on bar charts. Thereafter, pupils answered different questions relating to the frequency of birthdays and discussed trends with their peers.
- Teachers encourage pupils to be independent learners. This was evident in a key stage 1 class where pupils were using and manipulating a simple software programme to create two-dimensional medals. Pupils selected different colours and shapes to create medals, while others surfed the internet, collecting information on the different shapes and styles of medals. However, pupils' ICT skills are not as strong as they could be. In addition, pupils rarely use and hone their ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that pupils get the right support when it is needed. This was evident during the inspection as pupils were supported well in subjects such as Arabic, mathematics and ICT. Due to such effective support, all pupils engage in lessons and acquire skills and subject-specific knowledge

quickly.

- Teachers encourage pupils to read. Many pupils are avid and confident readers, prepared to pick up a good book whenever they have a free moment. Teachers have good subject knowledge in English and often focus on developing pupils' comprehension skills. This was emphasised in a class as pupils demonstrated their understanding of the current class reading book. All were challenged to read difficult words and to use their phonic skills to sound out and read unfamiliar words.
- Teachers are disciplined and have high expectations of pupils. For example, in Arabic, teachers focus on improving pupils' ability to recognise key Arabic words and match them with their equivalent words in English. Pupils in key stage 1 are familiar with the sounds and the written form of a range of Arabic words. Older pupils are adept at matching various Arabic words with prepositions such as, 'under', 'behind' and 'with'.
- Pupils enjoy English because they read interesting books and like to extend their writing skills. Pupils enjoy poetry and have won national recognition for their sterling work. Several pupils' writing appears in recent publications, one for poetry and two for short stories. Pupils are, quite correctly, very proud of their achievements in writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- At Al-Huda, pupils are encouraged to be active, conscientious citizens. This they demonstrate in their acts of kindness towards others, strong community spirit and engagement in activities to improve the local area, including picking up litter.
- Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school and have exceptionally well-developed leadership skills, which they practise as school council members, mentors, buddies and play leaders. Pupils regularly give their views. For example, they democratically decided on the end-of-term school trips, to the zoo, aquarium and Chester, which took place during the inspection. In addition, they recently worked with the headteacher to formulate the school values and give their views on how the budget for library books should be spent.
- Pupils who met with the inspector were eager to make it known that the school is a harmonious place where everyone is respected. They were adamant that racism never happens and bullying is unheard of.
- Pupils know exactly how to stay safe when using computers, tablets and mobile phones and know precisely what cyber bullying is and how to avoid it. They have wise advice on internet safety. Pupils who met with the inspector explained that, 'You should never share personal information when online, and only use computers with the permission of your parents, or an adult at school.'
- Pupils are well aware of the importance of regular exercise and enjoy engaging in rounders, dodge ball, bench ball, football, cricket and swimming. They know that healthy eating is essential and appreciate the value of a diet which is low in fat, sugar and salt.
- Pupils say that they always feel safe in school. Pupils are confident to report concerns to adults, secure in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their concerns dealt with

swiftly. Pupils know they can make staff aware of, 'wishes and worries'. Information kept by the school indicates that worries are rare.

- Pupils have high aspirations and are aware of employment opportunities and the requirements for professional and vocational career paths. Key stage 2 pupils recently attended a careers fair. Pupils also participated in British Science Week and have engaged in entrepreneurial activities including making perfumes, which they have sold to parents. In addition, outside agencies have given talks on pupils focusing on employability skills.
- Representatives from uniformed services, including police officers and firefighters, talk to pupils about their work and help to develop pupils' understanding of safe and unsafe situations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. All are eager to greet visitors and have exceptionally good manners. Pupils are studious and have excellent attitudes to learning. Their positive approach to their classwork makes a strong contribution to their good achievement.
- Pupils are of the view that behaviour is always good and say that learning is never disrupted by poor behaviour. Most parents are exceedingly positive about pupils' behaviour. Typically, they comment that, 'Behaviour is excellent, I couldn't wish for anything better', 'The school develops excellent character and behaviour' and 'Behaviour is not an issue...the school develops great spirituality and good manners.'
- Staff are highly positive about behaviour. All who completed the inspection survey indicated that pupils' behaviour is at least good and stated that they are supported well in managing behaviour. Typically, staff commented, 'Behaviour is very good. The school teaches strong values and pupils learn to behave well in a caring and productive environment.'
- Breaktimes are orderly. Pupils move around the school considerately, opening doors for each other and staff. Pupils enjoy playing various games with hoops, balls and tyres. They like to share and take turns and ensure that no one is left alone or misses out on games during break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils behave sensibly and safely. During the inspection, pupils were excited by the new apparatus in the play area. Older pupils were not afraid to 'walk the plank' and, in some cases, somersault onto a cushioned mat. However, staff are always at hand to make sure that pupils conduct themselves appropriately.
- Lunchtimes are very orderly occasions, when pupils enjoy eating and talking with their friends. All assured the inspector that such occasions are always 'peaceful'. Pupils are respectful towards lunchtime supervisors and thankful for their services.
- There have been no exclusions of any kind since the school opened. Behaviour logs show that behaviour is typically outstanding over time, with only very minor infringements of the school rules recorded.
- Pupils' attendance is well above average. No individual or group of pupils is disadvantaged by poor attendance. Pupils are acutely aware of the relationship between good attendance and good achievement. They are punctual to lessons, listen carefully to

adults and always try their best.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter key stage 1 with different skills and abilities. The school's own data indicates that pupils' progress across the both key stages 1 and 2 is strong in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects, including science and religious education (RE).
- For the last two years, the school has internally moderated the national statutory attainment tests, the results of which are high. For example, in 2018 at the end of Year 6, all pupils met at least the expected standard in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils' attainment in writing was not quite as good.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2019, most pupils attained highly, especially in mathematics. One of the challenges for the school is to increase the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher standard at the end of key stage 2 and at greater depth at the end of key stage 1. The school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that more pupils are attaining highly this year.
- Most pupils' writing skills are strong. All older pupils can write direct speech at length. For example, Year 6 English workbooks show many examples of pupils changing narrated text to first-person prose. In addition, pupils regularly read and write poetry, some of which appears in national publications. However, the most able writers are not consistently challenged in all classes.
- Pupils love to read and do so frequently. As a result, their progress in reading is good. Evidence of this is in reading records, which show that pupils read widely and often. Those who need additional support to improve their reading fluency benefit from tailored support when needed. Pupils who read for the inspector did so with confidence and good intonation. Pupils are familiar with a wide range of authors and enjoy different writing styles including comedy, science fiction and adventure. At the end of Year 1 in 2018, all pupils were secure at the national phonics screening check.
- Mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are usually challenged in their learning and have a strong appreciation of the importance of mathematics in everyday life. Pupils' workbooks are impeccably presented in all year groups. Most books contain examples of problem-solving activities and additional challenges for the most able. Teachers' focus on developing pupils' fluency in using operations and familiarity with times tables is equipping pupils with the skills they need to tackle harder work.
- Pupils' progress in acquiring the skills they need in ICT is not as strong as it could be. Across the school, pupils manipulate basic painting and desk-top publishing programmes to create leaflets and design motifs. In addition, pupils are skilled at producing well-presented and competently written texts using word-processing programmes. Pupils' skills are limited to these areas and few can manipulate complex software programmes.
- Work in pupils' RE books is of a high quality. For example, pupils' work on Buddhism is well-researched. Workbooks also contain interesting and well-presented work on the significance of water in Islam, Hinduism and Judaism.
- Pupils thrive in science and make strong progress in this subject. Pupils regularly engage in practical activities. For example, pupils study thermal insulation and conductors and investigate the properties of different materials, including plastics, wood, cotton and

paper. Year 5 pupils have created sunscreen and carried out investigations into particles, gasses and liquids. Other pupils recently utilised their chemistry skills and knowledge to make perfumes and soap, which they marketed and sold to parents.

- Few pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that additional support is available to pupils who need it. The SENCo monitors pupils' progress frequently, works with a range of specialists and helps parents to support their children's learning at home.
- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenge in all subjects. Leaders are aware of this. Teachers new to the school are being supported to enhance their skills in meeting pupils' individual learning needs.

Early years provision

Good

- Nearly all aspects of the early years provision are good. Staff have exceptionally strong bonds with children and very high expectations in relation to what children can achieve. Staff are trained well. They have a good understanding of the education, welfare and personal development requirements of children in the early years and a full appreciation of how young children learn.
- All children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with English as an additional language. They also enter with different skills and abilities in the various areas of learning. At the end of the Reception Year in 2018, a higher than average portion of children attained a good level of development and were ready for their learning in Year 1.
- Workbooks are detailed and meticulously maintained. They show that, currently, children are making good progress through the Nursery classes and the Reception class. Children are highly communicative, cooperative and eager to explore the world around them. This they demonstrate through their engagement in reading, painting, early mark-making and writing and their general curiosity and desire to find out new things.
- The training and support available to staff helps to ensure that they meet the specific educational needs of all children. For example, all staff are trained to support children with speech, language and communication difficulties. They work closely with the SENCo, aiming to be at the forefront of developments relating to working with children with SEND.
- Teaching is good. In the room for two-year-olds, children engage in early phonics. Typically, children recognise objects and animals, such as trains and bees, and make appropriate sounds. Most can name the different animals featured in the 'Old McDonald's Farm' song, including cows and sheep, which they accurately mimic.
- Behaviour is outstanding. This is especially evident during snack time, where children enjoy eating healthy food and socialising with their peers. Many have an excellent command of the English language. Staff ensure that no time is wasted and always focus on developing children's speaking, listening and counting skills. This was evident in the room for three- and four-year-olds as children immediately halted their activities when asked, listened to their teacher and started to clear away. All children counted while clearing, some to 20 and others up to 100.
- Teachers use effective techniques. This was exemplified in the Reception class, where the teacher used a teddy bear skilfully to read out different words, the sounds of which children matched to written words. Children behaved outstandingly well as they volunteered to answer

questions. Almost all were familiar with all the sounds in the alphabet and were able to sustain their engagement and concentration for extended periods.

- Indoor provision is highly stimulating and clearly linked to the different areas of learning in the early years curriculum. Children enjoy practising their handwriting skills, perfecting their drawing and painting techniques and exploring the properties of different materials including water and sand. All classes are generously resourced with books and feature reading areas. Children enjoy role-play and are encouraged to hone their 'cooking skills' and use their imagination, particularly during story time.
- Outdoor provision is good and much improved since the previous inspection. However, at the start of the inspection, provision lacked stimulation. During the inspection, leaders introduced a range of large format toys, plants, various games and a gardening area. Children sprang to life as they came out to play on day two. After initial reluctance, children were happy to demonstrate their balancing skills.
- Early years provision is not outstanding because, until recently, the outdoor learning and play area has been somewhat limited in developing children's gross motor skills and appreciation of the natural world. In addition, the leadership and management of the early years lacks coordination. The links between the Nursery classes and the Reception class are not as strong as they could be. Leaders are well aware of this and are currently recruiting a leader for early years.
- Parents who met with the inspector spoke very highly about their children's progress and opportunities available for parents to talk to staff and get involved in their children's learning. Parents are eager to chart their children's development and learning at home, as show in workbooks. Parents typically commented that: 'My children have been learning and progressing with the support of the teachers. The school communicates well with us on a regular basis' and 'My child loves the school.'
- Staff in the early years adhere to the same effective safeguarding procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2.

School details

Unique reference number	139017
DfE registration number	350/6002
Inspection number	10092583

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Hanif Mangera
Chair	Shafwan Ahmed
Headteacher	Zeinab Bhikha
Annual fees (day pupils)	£950
Telephone number	01204 841377
Website	http://alhudaprimary.co.uk/
Email address	info@alhudaprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–22 September 2016

Information about this school

- Al-Huda Primary School is an independent Muslim day school for boys and girls aged from two to 11 years. Most pupils are of Asian heritage; all are of the Islamic faith. The school aims to ensure that 'All pupils enjoy school life and develop positive attitudes to learning.'
- The school opened in 2013 and was registered by the Department for Education for up to 20 pupils. In January 2015, it was granted a material change to extend provision to key stage 2, with a total approved maximum capacity of 70 pupils. At this time, the adjacent Little Gems Nursery became part of the school. Currently there are 137 pupils and children on the school roll.

- The school has two Nursery classes; one caters for two-year-olds and the other for three- and four-year-olds. Children attend the Nursery on a part- and full-time basis. Children attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school is owned and operated by a charitable trust. All staff on the site are employed by the trust. Al-Huda Trust sets out to educate Muslim pupils according to the Islamic faith.
- The school also employs an executive headteacher who offers support and challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Most staff are new to the school since the previous inspection, including the headteacher and several teachers in the primary school. The school building has undergone extensive refurbishment to extend classrooms and office space. The outdoor play area has been renovated.
- Leaders from Westwood High School provide support to the headteacher and help to improve various aspects of the school, including teaching.
- The school internally administers and assesses key stage 1 and 2 national statutory attainment tests. Information was available on the outcomes of these tests for 2019 for key stage 1 and 2018 for key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of subjects, including English, ICT, Arabic and mathematics. Pupils' work was scrutinised during observations and separately with the headteacher. The inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher as well as the nursery leader and the SENCo.
- The inspector also met with a trustee, the executive headteacher and the school's educational consultant.
- The inspector met with staff and pupils and held informal discussions with pupils throughout the course of the inspection.
- The inspector took account of 17 staff and 44 pupil responses to questionnaires completed during the inspection and considered 135 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 77 text messages. The inspector met informally with parents and considered five letters submitted during the inspection.
- The inspector examined a range of documentary evidence. This included checks on the quality of teaching and teachers' performance, and safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's development plans and reviews of its own performance.
- The inspector checked various records of pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour and the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children.
- At the time of the inspection, all pupils in key stages 1 and 2 were on their annual summer school trip and were not in school on the second day of the inspection.
- The school's website was under construction at the start of the inspection. It was fully operational and compliant before the inspection ended. Outdoor learning and play areas were improved during the inspection.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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