

Inspection of Al-Risalah Boys School

145 Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 7TJ

Inspection dates: 3–5 December 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who are new to the school say they feel welcome. There are a wide range of clubs on offer. Pupils enjoy taking part in the many literary and artistic competitions teachers encourage them to enter.

Pupils understand the way teachers mark and comment on their work. They say they are not left guessing what teachers think of their efforts. Pupils show their teachers and one another the utmost respect in lessons. Not a moment is lost from learning through disruption. Teachers show pupils how much they enjoy the subjects they teach. This motivates pupils to try their best to live up to teachers' high expectations.

Parents and carers think leaders do a good job of helping pupils develop spiritually and academically. Leaders get staff to work together to help pupils discover their identity and overcome the challenges life has in store for them.

Pupils feel safe and confident to talk to an adult if they are worried. Staff and pupils get on well together. Pupils understand the way staff reward good behaviour and tackle unacceptable conduct. They think this is fair. Pupils do not see bullying as a problem. Leaders are not complacent and make sure staff are trained well to deal with bullying if it does occur.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The principal knows all the pupils individually and makes sure they appreciate how much he wants them to succeed. Teachers lead and manage the subjects they teach well. They make sure the agreed plans for teaching are put into practice. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This enables them to make sure pupils learn complex knowledge and check that they have understood it. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Leaders work closely with the governors who represent the proprietor. They are making a success of getting the boys' school off to a good start after it was agreed this would be separately registered. Leaders make sure all of the independent school standards are met. This includes making sure everyone can access the building and get information about the school. This means the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Pupils are able to study a wide range of subjects in all the areas of learning defined by the independent school standards. This breadth is maintained across the whole age range.

Teachers' plans for learning follow the national curriculum. They bring these to life through skilful and imaginative use of books, teaching materials and activities. Study plans are set out with the clear intention of helping pupils achieve relevant qualifications. Pupils are interested in learning more and lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Pupils start the school with varying knowledge and skills. Teachers expect all pupils to learn new knowledge and skills despite starting at different points. They make sure that there is equal access to learning for everyone by working with pupils to set regular objectives for their learning. This is particularly effective in English and mathematics. Despite teachers' good intentions, this is not the case in some other subjects. Sometimes pupils are less clear about how well they are learning. Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the relative strengths and weaknesses in subjects.

Leaders are making the development of teachers' leadership skills a priority. Currently, the principal is left to check the way the curriculum is put into practice on his own. This takes up too much of his time.

Leaders make sure that pupils develop and maintain an enjoyment of reading. The school library contains a good range of books which appeal to pupils' interests.

In English and mathematics, teachers make sure pupils remember key knowledge. The lessons they plan enable pupils to think deeply about each topic. For example, in Year 9 English lessons, pupils learn about the social and political context in which George Orwell wrote 'Animal Farm'. In mathematics, Year 11 pupils told us how their current work on algebra is building on their previous learning. This showed in pupils' books we looked at. However, there is some variation across subjects. In some subjects, pupils are unclear how to use their previous learning to deepen their knowledge.

Leaders make sure pupils have good opportunities to learn about cultures and beliefs other than their own. Their Islamic studies lessons help pupils to become knowledgeable about their own religion. Pupils remember what they have learned from visitors of other faiths. They also enjoy taking part in events alongside representatives of other parts of the local community.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to recognise and respond to prejudice and intolerance. Pupils remember hearing from adults in public office about how they overcame discrimination. The way topics in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education are organised helps pupils to build on their existing knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 7 debate the advantages and disadvantages of social media, which extends their underlying knowledge of online safety.

This is also true of the careers guidance on offer to pupils. Teachers provide unbiased advice about a wide range of employment and higher education options, including preparation for university.

Teachers include opportunities for pupils to learn how to respect and value people from different walks of life. This prepares them well for their future lives. Pupils understand and are expected to live up to British values in and out of school.

Leaders and governors think creatively about how to help teachers manage their

workload. For example, leaders bear in mind the additional challenge to work-life balance for staff during some periods of religious observance. Staff are positive about the working culture created by leaders.

Governors check that the premises are adapted appropriately for education and maintained well so that they meet the independent school standards. Staff who support the principal with administration do a very good job of maintaining meticulous records of checks, risk assessments and incidents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff understand how to look out for and report concerns about pupils' well-being. They receive effective training about updates in statutory safeguarding guidance.

Pupils are positive about what staff do to keep them safe. Leaders follow up on concerns thoroughly and promptly. They make sure parents and the local authority are consulted when a safeguarding matter needs looking into.

The principal routinely checks on pupils' views about how safe they feel. Leaders use their knowledge of potential risks to pupils to decide on lesson content.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Teachers implement the curriculum well. However, leaders recognise that there are some variations in how well pupils remember and apply prior learning in some subjects. They should ensure greater consistency in how well pupils use and apply their knowledge and skills across the whole curriculum.
- The principal currently does too much of the monitoring of the implementation of the curriculum on his own. This does not leave him with enough capacity to follow up on other important strategic matters. Governors should work with leaders to make sure the monitoring of pupils' achievement across the whole range of subjects is distributed more broadly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	146729
DfE registration number	212/6004
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10115235
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al Risalah Education Trust
Chair	Y Bobat
Principal	Suhayl Lee
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,600
Telephone number	020 8767 6057
Website	www.alrisalahboyschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@alrisalahboyschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was registered to admit up to 150 boys from 1 September 2019 after the school successfully applied for the boys' school to be separately registered from Al Risalah Girls' School. Both schools occupy a former cinema building.
- The school is registered to admit boys aged from 11 to 16 years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision. Outdoor play and physical education are offered at a nearby park which is owned by the local authority.
- There are currently no pupils on role with education, health and care plans and none registered as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We looked in depth at English, mathematics, history and computing. We visited lessons with school leaders, sampled pupils' work in these subjects and spoke with pupils about their learning. We also spoke with each of the teachers for these subjects.
- We also sampled pupils' work and spoke to teachers of other subjects including science, Islamic studies and PSHE.
- We spoke to a wide range of pupils about their learning and their views of the school.
- We held discussions with a representative of the proprietor and met with the principal to consider safeguarding. I scrutinised a wide range of documents including records of behaviour incidents, the checks made on the suitability of staff and records of checks on the premises.
- We took account of responses from 11 staff to Ofsted's survey and the written responses of four parents to Parent View during the inspection.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rosemarie Kennedy

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020