

Inspection of Al-Falah Primary School

48 Kenninghall Road, Clapton, London E5 8BY

Inspection dates: 28–30 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

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

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a warm, welcoming and caring place for pupils. Pupils are safe, enjoy coming to school and say bullying or poor behaviour are rare. There is a strong sense of community. Leaders, staff and parents support pupils in becoming strong British Muslim citizens. Pupils are proud of their school, they respect other cultures and are proud of their own.

Teachers have high expectations for every pupil in both their secular curriculum subjects and their Islamic studies. Equal emphasis is given to both. Pupils' learning is well planned so that they achieve well across all subjects. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Leaders make sure that pupils have access to a suitably rich programme of visitors and speakers. Pupils visit lots of interesting places. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the many improvements that they have seen since the last inspection.

Pupils are enthusiastic and regular readers. They read well, and phonics is taught effectively. Suitable books have been purchased to support phonics in classes. However, the reading books taken home by pupils are not as well matched to the pupils' ability as those they read in school.

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

The school has improved since the last inspection. Leaders are ambitious for their pupils. Staff training has supported curriculum leaders in setting out a clear programme of what they want pupils to know in each subject. Pupils engage fully with their learning and behave well. They study a broad range of subjects, in line with the requirements of the independent school standards.

Pupils' development in writing has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Leadership of writing is effective. Working with a local outstanding school, leaders cross-check pupils' writing to ensure that it is of a high standard. Pupils are confident writers across all subjects. Teachers' planning is effective. The planning highlights key texts and extracts from a range of literature. However, pupils should be exposed to a greater range of high-quality English literature. This will give pupils a better understanding of Britain's rich and varied literary heritage.

Pupils continue to achieve well in reading. Teachers encourage them to read throughout the day, developing a real love of reading. Phonics is taught well. However, in Years 1 and 2, pupils' access to well-matched phonics texts is not as wide as it could be. Unlike the books pupils read in class, those taken home are not always well matched to the sounds that pupils know. Younger pupils and lower-ability pupils need to take home suitable books to read.

Teachers' strong subject knowledge helps pupils to build on their prior learning. Teachers know how to help pupils. They quickly correct misconceptions and pupils are clear on what they need to learn. Pupils understand what they need to do to improve and the next step for their learning. Leaders states that the school does not have any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Senior leaders, governors and proprietors have focused on improving the school since the last inspection. They meet regularly, ensuring that the independent standards continue to be met. They make sure that the premises are suitable for every aspect of pupils' learning. This includes meeting the requirements of schedule 10 of The Equality Act 2010.

Leaders and staff provide very well for pupils' personal development. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to find out about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Pupils learn about democracy through studying and visiting the Houses of Parliament. They contribute to many community projects, such as litter-picking in their local environment. Pupils learn about different beliefs and cultures and the importance of respecting difference. Links are in place with other schools, including a local Jewish faith school.

The management body at the school consists of staff, community and parent governors, a chair, the headteacher and a business manager. It also includes representatives from the proprietorial body. Proprietors, including the chair of trustees, visit the school frequently. The proprietorial and management bodies hold leaders to account for their work to improve the school. Investment in staff training has improved the quality of education across the school.

Leaders and teachers are committed to making the school even better. Curriculum leaders' action plans are centred around careful subject planning and making ambitious choices about what pupils should study. They regularly check on how subject plans support improving pupils' achievement. Teachers were unanimous in their responses to Ofsted's online staff survey that the school is a lot better since it was last inspected. All staff said that they enjoy working at the school and that leaders are considerate of their well-being. As one staff member summed up: 'At Al-Falah Primary there is a strong sense of community where everyone is very supportive of others.' All parents who spoke with inspectors and who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire said that they would recommend the school to other parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. All staff act swiftly with leaders to keep pupils safe. They work appropriately with external agencies as required.

Proprietors ensure that systems are in place to enable a clear oversight of safeguarding and compliance against the independent school standards. A senior

administrator, who is also one of the school's designated safeguarding leads, oversees these duties. He demonstrates a good understanding of the statutory requirements and reports back regularly to the management body. Staff are appointed in line with statutory guidance and receive regular safeguarding training.

A suitable safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. It considers the most up-to-date statutory requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders' actions to improve pupils' achievement across the curriculum, particularly in writing, have been effective. However, leaders know that pupils' exposure to a greater range of high-quality English literature needs to be increased. This will enable pupils to have a better understanding of Britain's rich and varied literary heritage, further supporting the strong gains seen in their writing.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have made sure that pupils' development in reading remains strong. Pupils are enthusiastic and regular readers. However, reading books taken home by the youngest pupils are not as well matched to their phonic knowledge as those books that they read at school. As a result, they have fewer opportunities to draw on their phonics knowledge to read accurately and confidently. Leaders should improve pupils' fluency in reading, particularly for the lower-ability pupils, by ensuring that they have more opportunities to read suitable books that match their phonic knowledge.

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 are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	133449
DfE registration number	204/6410
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10123221
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Al-Falah Educational Trust
Chair	Shah Muhammad Anas
Headteacher	Mohammad Abu Hussain
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,600
Telephone number	020 8985 1059
Website	www.alfalahschool.org.uk
Email address	info@alfalahschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 October – 1 November 2018

Information about this school

- Al-Falah Primary School is an independent day school in Hackney. It is in a residential area of Clapton.
- The school has a Muslim ethos. Typically, secular curriculum subjects are taught in the morning, and the Islamic curriculum is taught in the afternoon.
- The school is registered for 120 pupils, boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 11. There are currently 100 pupils on roll from Year 1 to Year 6.
- There are no pupils with SEND. No pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

- The school's previous full standard inspection took place at the end of October 2018, when it was judged to require improvement. The school met all of the independent school standards.

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.

- During the inspection, we met with two members of the proprietor body (known as trustees) including the chair. We met with two governors and with members of the senior leadership team, including the headteacher. We also met with the administrator responsible for overseeing the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, writing, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and mathematics. We did this by visiting lessons, looking at pupils' written work, talking with pupils and teachers, and meeting with curriculum leaders. We heard pupils read.
- We also considered pupils' learning in science and geography. We observed and spoke to pupils during their breaktimes and when moving around the school.
- We reviewed safeguarding records, including the school's single central record of suitability checks on staff. We spoke with the designated safeguarding leaders and with several staff about safeguarding procedures.
- We toured the premises and scrutinised a wide range of documentary information to check that the requirements of the independent standards are met. This included checking the school's risk assessments, attendance information and staff training records.
- We spoke with parents at the start of the school day. We considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including the 15 free-text comments. We also considered the 12 responses to the online staff survey and 32 responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted Inspector

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