

Inspection of Al-Ikhlaas Primary School

35 Norfolk Street, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 7SY

Inspection dates: 2 to 4 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Al-Ikhlaas thrive in the calm learning environment that leaders have created. Pupils love being at school. They trust the adults in school to look after them and to keep them safe. Children in the early years settle quickly. They relish the opportunity to explore and learn together with their friends.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Older pupils value their roles as monitors. They take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils show tolerance, respect and understanding for others. Bullying is very rare. It is dealt with swiftly and effectively should it occur.

Pupils enjoy the extensive opportunities that are in place to enhance their personal development. These include visits to museums and working with a visiting scientist. Fieldwork and residential trips build pupils' confidence, resilience and teamwork. Visitors from local businesses, such as engineering and finance, contribute to pupils' high aspirations for the future. Pupils are proud of the work that they do to support local charities through fundraising events.

Pupils strive to live up to the school motto of 'success through sincerity, knowledge and actions'. They work hard and focus on their learning. This helps them to achieve well. The headteacher is ambitious for all pupils to contribute positively to society. Her high expectations are shared by staff and governors.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum from the early years to Year 6. Islamic and secular studies are carefully interwoven in the school's curriculum. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In most subjects, including English and mathematics, curriculum plans clearly outline the knowledge that pupils will gain and when they will be taught it. Assessment information is used effectively to identify what pupils know and can do. Curriculum plans are carefully ordered so that pupils can make connections between subjects. This allows pupils to apply what they know when learning something new. In these subjects, pupils achieve well. However, in a couple of subjects, curriculum plans do not identify the essential knowledge that leaders want pupils to know at key points in time.

Children achieve exceptionally well in the early years. This is because the curriculum is carefully planned to help them build the knowledge that they need to be successful. Children quickly develop their confidence, independence and curiosity about the world around them. Highly skilled staff seize every opportunity to broaden children's language and communication. Children are prepared extremely well for Year 1.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly and accurately. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their classmates. Pupils with SEND, including children with SEND in the early years, achieve well.

Leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. Staff work with other colleagues, including those in other schools. Sharing ideas and expertise helps to enhance teachers' knowledge further. This is especially useful for those staff who are new to teaching.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are extremely polite and well mannered. They work hard in lessons that are free from disruption. This enables pupils to thrive and succeed. This is also true in the early years. Children flourish in the well-established routines that promote their understanding of how to treat others and behave in a respectful and safe way.

A love of reading is fostered across the school. In the early years, children enjoy listening to traditional stories and joining in with songs and rhymes. They practise their phonics knowledge across a range of activities, both indoors and outside. As pupils progress through school, they apply their phonics knowledge accurately when reading unfamiliar words. Most pupils are fluent readers by the end of Year 2. Any pupils who struggle with reading, including pupils with SEND, benefit from the extra support that they receive from skilled staff. Pupils are actively encouraged to read widely and often across a range of subjects.

Pupils' understanding of different faiths, cultures and beliefs is exemplary. Leaders actively promote pupils' understanding of what makes a good friend. Pupils talked confidently about what British values mean to them and how these values aligned closely with their Muslim faith. Older pupils hold positions of responsibility. Pupils' debates on topical and relevant issues contribute to improvements to the school. Pupils develop a strong understanding of the importance of leading active, healthy lives, and they enjoy many sports. They recalled the extensive range of trips and visits that they have experienced as part of their work, for example in science and history.

Members of the proprietor body use their knowledge and experience well. They hold leaders to account effectively for the quality of education that pupils receive. They also ensure that leaders have the resources that they need to manage the school effectively. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel very well supported.

The proprietor body ensures that all of the independent school standards are met, including leaders' obligation to have an accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2020. The proprietor body fulfils all of its statutory duties. The proprietor body has ensured that the premises are well-maintained to a high standard. A suitable safeguarding policy is available on the school website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and their families well. They are especially vigilant when looking out for any subtle changes in pupils' behaviour or demeanour. Staff understand the procedures that they need to follow should they have any concerns about pupils. Leaders work with other agencies to ensure that pupils who need additional help are supported well.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when they are out in the local community. They know how to use the internet safely and how to report any worries or concerns that they may have.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a couple of subjects, pupils struggle to recall what they have been taught. In these subjects, curriculum plans do not identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to know at key points in time. This hinders pupils' ability to make connections and apply their knowledge when learning something new. Leaders need to ensure that all curriculum plans identify what should be taught and when so that pupils' knowledge builds effectively over time.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	136098
DfE registration number	888/6042
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10203831
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	151
Proprietor	Fountains of Knowledge
Chair	Imran Ashraf
Headteacher	Khaleda Begum
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,900
Telephone number	01282 618 899
Website	www.al-ikhlaas.org
Email address	headteacher@al-ikhlaas.org
Dates of previous inspection	11 to 13 July 2017

Information about this school

- Four new teachers joined the school staff in September 2021.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and staff and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with a representative from the proprietor body. Inspectors also spoke with the headteacher, members of the leadership team and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic development and geography. Inspectors also carried out a number of activities, and reviewed a range of evidence, for history, science, art and languages (Arabic). They met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to staff. They also spoke to pupils about their learning and their experiences of the school. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day. There were no responses to the staff's or pupils' surveys.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Tomlinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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