

Inspection of Leicester Islamic Academy

320 London Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 2PJ

Inspection dates: 22–24 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations for pupils. The religious ethos is threaded throughout the curriculum. Pupils develop a good understanding of spiritual, cultural and moral issues in the wider world. Staff make sure that all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, can access the curriculum. Pupils benefit from a variety of enrichment activities. They develop life skills, learn to be creative and work together to solve problems.

Most pupils say this is a good school where they enjoy learning. The school's values of honesty, equality, aspiration, resilience and thankfulness are at the heart of the school. Pupils know these values well. They are respectful and polite. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are encouraged to talk to trusted adults in school if they are worried. They know they can use the 'listening boxes' if they prefer for worries to be discussed anonymously. Pupils say that they feel safe at the school.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Bullying is rare. Pupils understand the systems to help them to manage their behaviour. Most think that staff sort out any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying fairly. They relish the opportunity to choose prizes in reward for their good behaviour, achievements and attendance.

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

Leaders have designed a logically sequenced curriculum. It sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to know from the early years to Year 6. The content is broad and ambitious. Leaders have thought carefully about how subjects and topics support pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and the religious ethos of the school. Teachers focus on helping pupils to aspire to the school motto of achieving 'excellence everyday'.

Teachers are clear what pupils must know and remember. In subjects such as mathematics and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, it is clear what teachers want pupils to learn and when. Learning is planned so that pupils can build on their prior learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 learn about children's human rights. Pupils in Year 6 debate their opinions on the 54 articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Occasionally, there are inconsistencies in the teaching of some aspects in the curriculum. Sometimes teachers are unclear how to teach pupils the precise knowledge they need to know.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils begin to learn to read from the early years. Nursery children begin to learn sounds as soon as they start school. They enjoy nursery rhymes and listening to stories. Children develop their knowledge of phonics well. Teachers match the books pupils read to the sounds they know. Pupils who need help with reading, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get timely support. Teachers provide extra phonics sessions where needed.

Pupils enjoy reading. Most pupils read with fluency and confidence. Pupils talk about authors they admire and fiction and non-fiction books they enjoy.

Teachers provide effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for pupils with SEND. They make sure that pupils understand. They use appropriate resources and teaching strategies to make learning accessible. For example, skilled adults provide support for pupils who need help with translation of work into their own language. Pupils with SEND benefit from extra support and teaching where necessary.

The Islamic ethos is highly valued. Leaders provide pupils with Islamic studies at the beginning of every day. This is taught by specialist teachers. Pupils enjoy reciting the Qur'an. They learn Arabic and discuss Islamic history. Pupils use their faith to help them to understand issues in the wider world and to reflect on them.

The PSHE curriculum effectively supports pupils' personal development. It includes relationships and sex education. Pupils gain the knowledge they need to live healthy lives and create positive relationships. Weekly themes help pupils to develop their understanding of fundamental British values. Enrichment and cultural activities, trips and experiences support aspects of the curriculum that promote personal development. Pupils learn about equality and diversity. They understand the importance of respect for those with protected characteristics. They learn about equality and the value of empathy for others. Pupils take on positions such as school council and eco council representatives. Through these roles, they learn responsibility and can influence decision-making for the school.

Curriculum leaders provide valuable guidance for staff to support their teaching. Staff greatly appreciate what many describe as the supportive 'family' approach to working in the school. Most appreciate the support from leaders for their welfare and workload. Those who are new to the school or at the early stages of their careers appreciate the training and coaching they receive.

Members of the proprietorial board and governors are knowledgeable. They ensure that the school meets the independent school standards. The welfare requirements for children in the early years are met. There is a suitable medical room for pupils who may potentially fall ill. Toilets and urinals have water and washing facilities. The hot water does not pose a risk of scalding. Pupils are appropriately supervised at different times throughout the school day. Governors ensure that there are frequent checks on the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. Strategies and policies for administering first aid and dealing with behaviour and bullying are suitable. The complaints policy provides a clear structure for parents and carers to follow up any grievances they may have against the school. The school's safeguarding policy, which reflects the latest guidance, is available on the school's website. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school. A typical comment was that the school 'provides a nurturing environment that allows children to be confident in exploring who they are and the skills they want to develop and pursue'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive appropriate training. They understand the policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Leaders provide frequent updates for staff to ensure that they remain vigilant. Staff know how to identify signs that a child may be at risk of harm. They promptly report any concerns. Pupils learn about potential risks to their safety, including risks from peer pressure, drugs and when online.

Governors make sure that checks on the safeguarding of pupils are an ongoing priority. Leaders closely monitor pupils who may be at risk. They use the guidance of external services when they may be beneficial to pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have a clear intent for the curriculum. The content for what they want pupils to learn and when is outlined. However, there are some inconsistencies in the teaching and implementation of some aspects in the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all teachers understand how to teach pupils the important knowledge they need to know.

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	120335
DfE registration number	856/6007
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10209161
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	280
Number of part-time pupils	13
Proprietor	Leicester Islamic Academy Trust
Chair	Hussein Suleman
Headteacher	Tabassum Jakhura (Interim Headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,290
Telephone number	01162705343
Website	www.lia.uk.net
Email address	admin@lia.uk.net
Date of previous inspection	21–23 November 2017

Information about this school

- An interim headteacher was appointed in October 2020.
- Since the last inspection several members of staff have left the school and new staff have joined the school.
- The school day starts at 8.15am for Islamic studies teaching.

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 the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned Ofsted to carry out the standard inspection earlier in the inspection cycle than previously planned. This was due to concerns the DfE had received relating to the welfare and safety of pupils at the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the interim headteacher, deputy headteacher, school business manager, middle and curriculum leaders and administration staff. They also spoke to members of staff. Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and met with several groups of pupils. The lead inspector met with two members of the proprietorial body, one of whom was also the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics, PSHE and art. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans for these subjects, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors looked at planning and pupils' work for other subjects such as science and Islamic studies. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors discussed with leaders and staff the school's approach to safeguarding pupils and checked the single central record. Inspectors reviewed records relating to behaviour, first aid and safeguarding. Checks were made on staff training and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation and policies, including those relating to school improvement, the curriculum, health and safety, and attendance and behaviour. The lead inspector toured the school premises.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Liz Moore

Ofsted Inspector

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