

Inspection of Abu Bakr Girls School

154-160 Wednesbury Road, Palfrey, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 4JJ
Shelly Campus, Scarborough Road, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 9TY

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' personal development is the hallmark of this school. The high level of pastoral care dovetails with the school's Islamic ethos. Pupils are happy, confident and keen to welcome visitors to their school. Pupils say, 'Abu Bakr is a unique school because we are the same, but different in our own ways'.

Leaders are determined that all pupils will achieve well academically. Leaders are constantly reviewing and improving the school's curriculum to support this ambition.

There is an orderly atmosphere around the school. Pupils are polite and respectful. On the playgrounds, they enjoy spending social time with their friends where they sit and chat. However, the playgrounds are tired and require development. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is positive. Teachers can teach, and pupils can learn.

Pupils understand and learn about the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Bullying does not happen very often, but when it does, staff deal with incidents quickly. Pupils and parents value this.

Parents have mixed views about the school. They say their children are happy and do well in school. However, some parents are less positive about how their concerns are dealt with and changes in staffing.

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

In almost all subjects, the curriculum maps out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn as they move through the school. This helps teachers to know what to teach and when to teach it. New learning builds on what has been taught before. However, the primary art and design curriculum focuses on the activity, rather than the development of knowledge and skills. Additional curriculum information, as well as support from leaders and colleagues, helps teachers to plan lessons if they feel less confident with a particular subject, or an aspect of a subject.

Reading is a whole-school priority. Leaders recognise the importance of reading to ensure that pupils can fully access the rest of the curriculum. Children begin learning phonics very early on in Reception. The order of phonics teaching is clearly set out across the early years, key stage 1, and beyond if required. Teachers teach phonics well. Pupils' reading books are well matched to their phonic ability and support phonic acquisition. Pupils develop their early reading skills successfully. Children and pupils say they enjoy reading.

Teachers explain new ideas clearly and in a logical manner. This helps pupils to make connections to what they have learned previously. Teachers use questioning well to find out what pupils already know. Teacher questioning encourages debate and extends learning further. In most instances, staff have secure subject knowledge across a range of subjects. However, a small number of staff have gaps in their subject knowledge in relation to spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Leaders and staff have created a school community that promotes inclusion well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in lessons and all aspects of school life. Teachers make adaptations within lessons, provide extra resources, and step in to support pupils' learning if required. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, the citizenship curriculum and the relationships and sex education curriculum have been designed well to support pupils' personal development. These are supplemented by assemblies and special events. Pupils are keen to contribute to the local community. Following a visit from a representative of Walsall council, pupils are looking forward to taking part in a litter pick in Palfrey Park. During the week of the inspection, primary pupils were taking part in a science week. Pupils were excited about exhibiting and sharing their science projects with other year groups in the main hall.

Pupils have a sound understanding of fundamental British values. They talk knowledgeably about democracy, how laws are made and how this relates to everyday life in school. Pupils have a detailed understanding of other religions. They speak confidently about the similarities and differences that exist between Islam and other religions. Pupils talk about the different types of relationships and families that exist in their local community. This includes single-parent families, same-sex couples and children who are in care. Pupils know how to maintain healthy lifestyles and they have a growing awareness of mental health.

From early on, staff support pupils to think about their chosen career pathway and the choices they will need to make to achieve this. In the secondary phase, National Careers' Week is held every spring and leaders organise a range of related activities. Work experience opportunities have been affected by COVID-19, but staff have organised virtual work experience in a range of professions. Local sixth forms, colleges and universities come into school to speak to pupils about the range of post-16 options that are available, including A-level and T-level courses and apprenticeships.

School leaders, with the support and backing of the proprietor and the trust board, are always looking for ways to improve the school even further. They are determined to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience in a nurturing environment. Staff support leaders well to achieve this ambition.

Teachers value the training they receive, such as the writing and mathematics workshops that were held at the primary site. Teachers say that workload is manageable and that leaders are considerate of their well-being.

Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 as a suitable accessibility plan is in place.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is the school's top priority and everyone's responsibility. The proprietor has made sure that staff, including those responsible for the leadership of safeguarding, are well trained. Consequently, everyone knows what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Training includes updates linked to government guidance and specific aspects, such as peer-on-peer abuse and the 'Prevent' duty. All aspects of health and safety are managed effectively. Pupils say they feel safe in school because the staff look after them.

The safeguarding policy meets current government guidance and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The primary art and design curriculum focuses on the activity, rather than the development of knowledge and skills. As a result, in this subject, pupils' knowledge and skills do not build well across the primary phase. Leaders need to map out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in art and design across the primary age range. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- A small number of staff have gaps in their subject knowledge in relation to spelling, punctuation and grammar. This means that some staff do not always deliver the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders need to identify gaps in staff's subject knowledge and provide appropriate support.

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	132750
DfE registration number	335/6010
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10216637
Type of school	All-through Islamic day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	487
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mohammad Luqman
Acting executive headteacher	Mohammad Luqman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800 to £2,500
Telephone numbers	01922 626829 (primary site) 01922 612361 (secondary site)
Websites	www.abubakrgirlschool.org www.abubakrprimaryschool.org
Email address	info@abubakrgirlschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 to 18 January 2018

Information about this school

- Abu Bakr Girls School is an independent all-through Islamic day school that caters for girls up to the age of 16.
- The proprietor's vision is that pupils will become leaders of the community, where they are looked up to as role models.
- The school is split between two sites, a primary site and a secondary site. Both sites are in Walsall.
- The school is part of the Abu Bakr Trust.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was operating beyond its registration agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). The school is catering for boys and girls on the primary site.
- The week before the inspection, the previous executive headteacher stepped down from the role to take a sabbatical. However, she was present throughout the inspection in her role as advisory headteacher and was the main point of contact for the inspection team. The proprietor is currently the acting executive headteacher.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last full inspection was in January 2018. The school was judged to be good.

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 school leaders and have taken this into account in the evaluation.

- The lead inspector met with the proprietor, who is currently the acting executive headteacher and met with the advisory headteacher and the two associate headteachers. The lead inspector also met with three members of the trust board.
- Inspectors held meetings with the safeguarding team, two special educational needs coordinators, the leads for attendance and behaviour, and other school leaders.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, art and design, and PSHE education. For each deep dive,

inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Two separate groups of pupils accompanied inspectors on learning walks around the two sites.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the end of the day. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records and attendance information.
- The inspectors looked at information published on the school's website.
- During the inspection, school leaders applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. The application was to co-educate boys and girls on the primary site. At the DfE's request, inspectors checked whether the school meets the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. The outcome of this part of the inspection is that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards should the material change be accepted. The material change has already been implemented.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Satchwell	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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