

Inspection of Normanton House School

Normanton House, Village Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 8DF

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

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?

Pupils are happy to be part of the Normanton House School family. Younger pupils are smiley and full of enthusiasm for learning. Older pupils have highly positive attitudes to their education. All pupils are respectful, supportive and considerate of each other and staff. Pupils are proud of their school.

Parents and carers speak very positively about the school. They appreciate the staff's care for their children. Typically, one parent commented: 'This school is great, not only for its educational provision but also in helping to mould my children into the best versions of themselves.'

Pupils benefit from the strong school ethos and supportive environment. The school's values of 'nurturing, honouring and serving' are consistently demonstrated by staff and pupils. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils say that they feel safe because 'we all treat each other like brothers and sisters'.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities that support their personal development. They learn about equality and diversity. They are very respectful of those who may hold different views and beliefs to them.

The school has high expectations of pupils. These expectations are realised in most subjects. Many pupils achieve well in the subjects they study.

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

The school has committed itself to improving the quality of education provided to pupils. Many subject curriculums are well planned. The mathematics curriculum continues to be ambitious and delivered in a well-sequenced way. Other subject areas are now matching these same standards. For example, in English, Arabic and Urdu, staff have identified key learning in their curriculum planning. Pupils practise and build on previous learning. They know more, remember more and acquire new skills because the curriculum in these subjects is well planned. The school is committed to further development to ensure that every subject curriculum is equally ambitious and well planned.

Teachers regularly assess pupils' learning to check what they have remembered. However, they do not always adjust their lessons to ensure that pupils' knowledge gaps are addressed before moving on to new learning.

Pupils who fall behind their peers are generally well supported by staff, particularly in the primary phase. However, it is not always clear to staff why these pupils may be struggling, and whether this is because they may have additional learning needs. There is not yet in place a robust-enough system to identify if pupils have any additional learning needs. As a result, the support some pupils receive is not as precisely planned or as effective as it could be.

Reading is prioritised. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure. Those at the early stages of learning to read are supported by a well-structured phonics programme. Reading books closely match the phonics sounds that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning. However, not all staff use a consistent approach when supporting pupils with their reading. This can confuse pupils and slow their progress in becoming accurate and fluent readers.

The school is exceptional in promoting pupils' attitudes to learning. All pupils are diligent and committed to producing their best work in lessons. They persevere and are highly motivated to achieve because staff instil this desire in them. Pupils are polite and friendly towards each other, the staff and visitors. There is a tangible sense of calm and purposefulness throughout the school. Pupils' overall attendance is high.

The school has continued to promote pupils' personal development. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is well thought through. There are opportunities to learn about physical and mental health and age-appropriate relationships and sex education. Pupils are very well supported in developing their strength of character. Pupils contribute positively to the local community and engage in charitable fundraising. They know about fundamental British values. They are respectful of different cultures and religions. They have many opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and values. However, their understanding of different beliefs is limited. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education and/or training. There is a well-structured careers programme in place which includes work experience for older pupils. Overall, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Staff feel well supported. They say that the recent improvements to school processes have had a positive impact on their workload. They are proud to work at the school. The school has continued to invest in training opportunities for staff. Those new to teaching have appreciated being supported by more experienced teachers.

Trustees and senior leaders have strategically focused on the areas of development that will have the most impact. This has been evidenced in the improvements made to the curriculum and the quality of education pupils receive. Those with responsibility for the school know it well. They understand their statutory duties and have a good understanding of the independent school standards (the standards). They make sure that the school meets all the standards consistently. The premises are well maintained. Risk assessments are accurate and reflect the school's policy. Policies are up to date and reflect the latest national guidance.

The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The policies for relationships and sex education, and safeguarding, are available on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Some pupils who do not achieve as well as they should are not assessed accurately to determine if they may have additional needs. As a result, the support they receive is not precisely targeted as staff do not have all the information they need to understand why these pupils may be falling behind. The school should ensure that there are comprehensive processes in place to accurately identify and assess any additional needs pupils may have, so that these pupils receive precise and effective support to achieve well.
- Not all staff take a consistent approach when supporting pupils to read. Pupils are being given different messages about how to use phonics to help them learn to read. As a result, errors are introduced, as the correct phonemes are not used by staff and pupils consistently. Those with responsibility for reading should ensure that all staff know how best to support pupils to become accurate and fluent readers as quickly as possible.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	134294
DfE registration number	831/6006
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10286407
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al Akram Trust
Chair	Arshad Piracha
Headteacher	Asma Piracha
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,400 to £2,700
Telephone number	01332 769333
Website	www.alakramtrust.org.uk/normantonhouse school
Email address	admin@alakramtrust.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 to 24 March 2022

Information about this school

- Normanton House School is an independent Islamic day school. The school is registered to teach 180 pupils aged five to 16. There are currently 137 pupils on the school's roll. Boys and girls attend the primary phase of the school. The school provides secondary education for girls only.
- The school is owned by Al Akram Trust and provides an Islamic curriculum as well as a secular curriculum.
- There are no pupils registered as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last standard inspection was in March 2022.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and the director of the school. The lead inspector met with members of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, Arabic, Urdu, reading and mathematics. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered curriculum plans for, and pupils' work in, geography.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school improvement plan.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors took note of parents' responses on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's survey of school staff. Inspectors met with pupils to discuss different aspects of the school's provision.
- Inspectors toured the premises and reviewed the school facilities.

Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Aileen King

Ofsted Inspector

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