

Inspection of Al-Aqsa Schools Trust

The Wayne Way, Leicester, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 4PP

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 January 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

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?

Strong relationships with staff help pupils to feel safe and happy at this school. Pupils work closely with the pastoral team to share worries, knowing there is always someone to talk to. Pupils know any concerns they have will be addressed swiftly and effectively. This supportive environment ensures that pupils feel valued and secure. Pupils say the school has a 'family feel'.

The school's values, such as kindness, trust and manners, are embedded in daily life. This fosters a respectful community. Behaviour is positive. Poor language or discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils uphold these values, demonstrating respect and a strong understanding of equality. They recognise the importance of inclusivity and fairness.

Teachers' high expectations of academic performance raise aspirations for pupils. Careers education is well structured, helping pupils to explore future pathways and develop ambition. By the end of Year 11, pupils gain strong academic qualifications, enabling them to progress confidently to further education or training.

Pupils develop leadership skills through opportunities such as enterprise projects and the school council. The school council gives pupils a voice, enabling improvements such as new playground markings to enhance break times. These experiences help pupils to build confidence, responsibility and teamwork, preparing them for future roles in school and beyond.

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

The school provides a broad and ambitious curriculum. This ensures that pupils receive a high-quality education. Subjects are well structured, building knowledge progressively. For example, in science, key concepts like electricity and circuits are introduced in the primary phase and revisited in Year 7 before deepening further in Year 10 and 11 through electromagnetism. In mathematics, core skills are carefully sequenced, ensuring that pupils develop fluency. This helps pupils to tackle more complex problem solving. In English, pupils are introduced to Shakespearean language through 'Twelfth Night', progressing to 'Romeo and Juliet' and then 'Macbeth'. This deepens their literary understanding over time.

Most teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and present information clearly. Teachers structure lessons well. This ensures that pupils build knowledge and skills over time. Teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding and address misconceptions. This enables pupils to apply their learning with confidence. On occasions, in some subjects in the primary phase, feedback is not always purposeful, which limits some pupils achieving as well as they should.

Over time, pupils know and can do more. For example, in art, they develop a secure grasp of the formal elements such as line, shape and shading. They build on this by studying artists, analysing their techniques and using these influences in their own

work. This is evident in pupils' exploration of concealment, where they apply knowledge from their study of Charlotte Caron to develop their own artistic responses.

Early reading is a priority, with a strong focus on phonics teaching as soon as children start in the Reception Year. Pupils develop confidence in identifying sounds. Teachers model sounds accurately and support pupils to use them to read words successfully. Phonics sessions are engaging and reinforce learning. Expert staff provide extra reading sessions so that pupils who are struggling to keep up with the reading programme catch up quickly. Pupils apply their skills well in reading and writing, with regular assessment ensuring targeted support where needed. Pupils read widely and often. They develop an appreciation of reading.

The school has effective strategies to identify pupils' additional needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the help they need to access the curriculum. They are closely monitored to ensure that they achieve as well as they should.

The early years curriculum provides children with a strong start. Story time is engaging and helps support language development. Children enjoy listening to and role-playing familiar stories and rhymes like 'Billy Goat Gruff'. Hands-on activities introduce key mathematical concepts like capacity. Adults generally interact well with children, using questioning to extend thinking. However, interactions are not always of consistent high quality, meaning learning through play is not always fully supported.

Pupils demonstrate respect and commit to their studies. The school is calm. Learning is free from disruption. Pupils respond well to clear expectations and positive behaviour is reinforced through systems such as points and values slips. Celebration assemblies provide further opportunities to acknowledge pupils' successes. The school takes intelligent actions when pupils' attendance does not meet the school's expectations. This ensures that pupils attend well. High attendance is celebrated.

Pupils explore moral and ethical issues through discussion, such as debating the morality of animal testing from Islamic and Christian perspectives. Relationships education ensures that pupils develop a strong understanding of respect, consent and well-being. Trips, such as visits to Warwick Castle and the Curve Theatre, enrich pupils' learning, broadening their cultural awareness and bringing history and literature to life. 'Culture day' celebrates diversity further, encouraging pupils to share and appreciate different traditions and backgrounds. These experiences prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Survey responses from parents suggest that staff go above and beyond to support pupils, demonstrating strong commitment and care. Staff also feel that leaders consider their well-being and workload.

The school's leaders and proprietors demonstrate the ability to consistently meet the Independent School Standards. Premises, health and safety checks are rigorous,

ensuring that the learning environment is safe, secure and conducive to high-quality education. Risk assessments are thorough, covering all areas of the school site and activities, with regular reviews to maintain high standards. Recruitment procedures are robust, with all necessary safeguarding checks completed and recorded accurately. This includes checks for staff, governors and volunteers, reflecting a secure approach to safer recruitment. The school's commitment to these standards reflects a strong culture of safety, compliance and accountability. Leaders actively monitor compliance with statutory requirements, demonstrating a proactive approach to continuous improvement and safeguarding pupils' welfare.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Teaching in a few foundation subjects in the primary phase is not as effective as it is throughout the rest of the school. For example, sometimes feedback is not precise enough to help pupils improve. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well in some of these subjects. The school should ensure that teaching in all subjects is highly effective.
- Adult interactions with children in the early years do not consistently promote discussions about what is being taught. As a result, some children do not consolidate learning through play as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff interactions promote discussion and support children to know and remember more across all areas of learning.

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	134809
DfE registration number	856/6017
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10342049
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al-Aqsa Schools Trust
Chair	Ibrahim Hewitt
Headteacher	Abdelhamid Chachi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,483 to £2,918
Telephone number	0116 276 0953
Website	www.alaqsaschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@alaqsaschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 to 3 February 2022

Information about this school

- Al-Aqsa Schools Trust is an Islamic independent day school.
- Since the last inspection there has been a significant change in leadership with a new headteacher starting in September 2022 and the appointment of two new deputy headteachers.
- The school has a Nursery for three- and four-year-old children. 47 children attend either morning or afternoon sessions. A few children attend both morning and afternoon sessions.
- The school admits girls and boys to the early years and primary provision. Girls only are admitted to the secondary phase.
- Children in early years and the primary provision are taught on a separate site to the girls in the secondary provision. The two sites are next door to each other and share the same address.
- The school does not make use of 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with members of the proprietor board including the chair, the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities co-ordinator and early years leader.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, early reading, mathematics, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, spoke to leaders and visited lessons related to some other subjects. These included personal, social, health and economic education, computing, history, religious education and geography.

- 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.
- To inspect compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors reviewed documentation, including policies and plans, and the lead inspector had a tour of the site with the headteacher.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christine Horrocks

Ofsted Inspector

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