

# Al-Khair School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	306/6096
Unique Reference Number	134585
Inspection number	316882
Inspection dates	20-21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Neville Grenyer AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Al-Khair School is an independent Muslim day school for boys and girls of primary school age and, currently, for boys of secondary school age. Situated in East Croydon, it opened in 2003 and now has over 150 full-time registered pupils aged from 4 to 16. The school aims *'to provide a suitable environment for pupils to receive a broad, balanced curriculum based on the National Curriculum with additional Islamic input designed to cater for their moral, spiritual and physical development'*. The school timetable includes Islamic and National Curriculum subjects from Reception through Key Stages 1, 2, 3 to Key Stage 4, where pupils study GCSE. The school was last inspected in 2005.

## Evaluation of the school

Al-Khair School provides a satisfactory quality of education, with some outstanding features and much that is good. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils and most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Pupils make good progress in their learning and the school is improving the monitoring of their progress. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the pupils are outstandingly well behaved, and the school makes good provision for their welfare, health and safety. It meets all but two of the regulations.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and it has good features. The school's aims are met successfully. The main strengths of the curriculum are the emphasis on basic skills at Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly literacy in Key Stage 1, where reading skills are taught well, as is joined handwriting. The curricular provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is a strength of the school, alongside the range of subjects available for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the arrangements for teaching Arabic. Reception and Key Stage 1 classes study the Qur'an, Arabic and Islamic Studies, numeracy, English, physical education (PE), cookery and science; Reception pupils have non-verbal reasoning and art and Key Stage 1 classes study humanities topics. Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils discontinue their cookery and take up English literature and history and geography as discrete subjects. At GCSE the pupils can study the Qur'an, English Language, mathematics,

science, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, Islamic Studies, Arabic, history and English Literature. Although there is little in the way of art in the secondary curriculum, English literature, Islamic Studies, Arabic and history provide pupils with a range of aesthetic experiences, and pupils have the opportunity for performances and poetry reading.

The school management has been thinking hard about developing the school's curriculum and has identified a number of areas for further development. One of these is the development of literacy across the curriculum which is encouraged effectively by a few teachers, but not addressed sufficiently well by most. Although most teachers make a point of writing key words on the whiteboard as literary prompts, there is little coordination of literacy across the curriculum; no work seen showed teachers helping pupils to use writing frames, for example, to help them to structure their written work and pupils are not routinely encouraged to use dictionaries. The introduction of effective subject co-ordination is another area for development identified by the school. Increasing the range of out of classroom activities to support the curriculum was also an issue identified by the school and in the inspection questionnaires for parents, which showed that while most were content, appreciable numbers of parents and pupils would value a wider range of such activities.

The quality of teaching is good. There is some outstanding teaching, and it is always at least satisfactory. In one outstanding science lesson observed, pupils in Year 7 were enthused when they were looking at the very nature of matter itself, and began to appreciate the powerful fascination of science at its best. Good lessons have appropriate aims and objectives made clear to the pupils in interesting ways; this was seen in a Reception class PE lesson where pupils chose the next part of the body they felt needed exercise. It was also shown in a Year 10 geography lesson where pupils had the opportunity to decide for themselves the wording of the lesson's objectives, after they had looked at a GCSE question on population structures. Lessons are generally planned carefully and taught effectively by teachers with appropriate expertise and skill. In all lessons planning is at least satisfactory and is usually good.

Teachers know their pupils and their strengths and weaknesses well, and can plan accordingly. The teachers are often, but not always, careful to give all their pupils appropriately challenging work. For example, in good lessons, teachers carefully and subtly adapt the level of their questions to match the abilities and aptitudes of their pupils.

Pupils' progress is generally good. Sometimes it is outstanding but is always at least satisfactory. Pupils make noticeable progress in lessons, and sometimes react audibly: *'Oh, now I understand!'* exclaimed one pupil spontaneously in a Year 7 Arabic lesson. Scrutiny of pupils' work in exercise books and folders show that they make appreciable progress over time in terms of literacy, maturity of expression and

the subject content of their work. This is helped particularly where teachers make comments about the progress pupils have made.

Assessment is good, as there is an effective system of assessment throughout the school. Assessment records follow and implement the assessment policy and provide a useful basis for planning. The school is tracking pupils' progress on a yearly basis using Qualifications and Curriculum Authority tests and materials for pupil, class and school targets. Recent in-service training has, amongst other areas, concentrated on assessment for learning and the school is developing systems to address this approach further.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Their moral and spiritual development is outstanding. Opportunities for reflection in lessons are frequent in the Islamic subjects, in PSHE and in citizenship. Unusually, as part of its PSHE provision, the school also operates a course on the social and emotional aspects of learning, a specific programme to promote pupils' emotional health and well-being. Pupils are poised, calm and reflective. Teachers are seen as role models. Partly as a result, pupils are polite, well behaved, considerate, and reflective. They report that there is little or no bullying and that it would be dealt with very effectively by the school. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have many opportunities to develop a wide range of useful skills for their future lives and work. They attend school regularly and enjoy their education, as shown by their attitudes to learning and the very positive responses in the inspection questionnaires. Although they can contribute to numerous school council activities, there has not been a high profile role for the school council yet; representatives have spoken or performed at community and charitable events as individuals. Pupils do gain an adequate knowledge and understanding of public services and institutions. Provision for pupils' social and cultural development is good. Through the school, many pupils are in the Al-Abtaal scouts group as cubs, beavers and scouts. Those in the scouts group take part in national and local scouting association events. All classes go on one trip per term and visit a range of sites of educational interest. Pupils in the primary school write to orphans in the Kashmir region of Pakistan in homes run by the Al-Khair Foundation. There is a weekly reading club to boost the reading skills of pupils identified by teachers to be in danger of underperforming in this area.

Pupils are prepared well for life in a multicultural society through several curriculum areas, including Islamic Studies, citizenship and history, as well as through topic work in the primary section.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes good provision for its pupils' welfare, health and safety. Its policies clearly set out the strategies to be followed, backed up by systems to ensure that they are implemented effectively. There are good systems of monitoring and review although at present they all fall due for revision at the same time, in February 2008. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy and as a result this was not seen to be a problem by pupils or parents in their responses to the inspection questionnaire. There is an up-to-date child protection policy with appropriately trained, designated staff. Drug education is included in the science curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to stay safe and healthy through careful diet. There is a good risk assessment and educational visits policy. The school's behaviour policy is very effective and pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection was outstanding. The health and safety policy is rigorous and is implemented effectively, with useful records kept. The first aid policy is particularly effective; there are four fully-trained first aiders and well-equipped first aid kits on each floor and in the science laboratory. The school has completed a thorough fire risk assessment passed by the local fire officer. The school records serious disciplinary offences and maintains attendance and admission registers appropriately.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school makes good provision to ensure that the staff and proprietor are suitable to work with children. All checks have been made and there is a single central record, in line with recent changes in the regulations.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are located in adapted office buildings which are, for the most part, satisfactory for their purpose, but do not yet meet the regulatory requirements in every respect. Classrooms are generally pleasant well decorated and suitably furnished and provide a safe and appropriate environment for learning. They are all at least adequate in size although a few are at their capacity with current numbers. The school has recently purchased neighbouring premises to alleviate this pressure. There is a well-equipped science laboratory and a specialist ICT room. There is an excellent medical room with facilities for first aid and a medical couch, and appropriate access to a nearby toilet and washroom. The assembly hall on the first floor is an attractive location for meetings such as assembly and daily prayers. There is appropriate general sanitary provision in terms

of lavatories and washrooms for staff and pupils, and these are clean and well maintained.

Those rooms without external walls and windows lack ventilation. The sports hall is already a useful facility for the school and its community, being used for Friday prayers and for other community uses, such as an aerobics class for Muslim women. However, hazards are presented by slippery surfaced areas of the floor and the finish of a section of wall, currently screened off. The school occasionally uses a local park for recreation but most playtimes take place in the covered sports hall, as the journey to the park, although very short, involves crossing the busy main road outside the school using a pedestrian crossing.

The school has prepared a three-year plan in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002).

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides good information for parents; the prospectus and the information pack together meet all the statutory requirements. The school reports seen were informative and helpful to parents and pupils alike. Almost all parents in their inspection questionnaires considered that the school kept them well informed about their children's progress.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school meets all the requirements for handling formal and informal complaints. It has not received any formal written complaints in the last year.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- improve the ventilation in the classrooms for Years 2 and 5 and in Reception (paragraph 5(p))
- complete work to correct hazards relating to the flooring and walling of the sports hall (paragraph 5(j)).

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- establish a more rigorous system of curriculum coordination and guidance, particularly at primary level, in order to ensure cross-curricular coherence with regard to developing pupils' literacy, and more support for non-specialist teachers
- review policy renewal dates so as to confirm priorities and relieve pressure on the administration of the school.



## School details

Name of school	Al-Khair School
DCSF number	306/6096
Unique reference number	134585
Type of school	Muslim
Status	Independent
Date school opened	2003
Age range of pupils	4-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 97      Girls: 55      Total: 152
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,000 (primary) £3,300 (secondary)
Address of school	109-117 Cherry Orchard Road Croydon Surrey CR0 6BE
Telephone number	0208 662 8664
Fax number	0208 649 9964
Email address	admin@alkhair.org.uk
Headteacher	Mr Usman Qureshi
Proprietor	Mr Qasim Ahmad
Reporting inspector	Neville Grenyer AI
Dates of inspection	20-21 November 2007