

# Al-Asr Primary School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	889/6006
Unique Reference Number	131983
Inspection number	320155
Inspection dates	8-9 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain Al

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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## 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-Asr Primary School was registered in 2001 and this is its first inspection. The school makes provision for girls and boys aged between 4 and 11 years and at the time of inspection there were 106 pupils on roll. At age eleven, pupils transfer to local maintained secondary schools or independent Islamic schools. Most pupils live near to the school and all are from Muslim religious backgrounds. The school aims to 'create a caring and warm Islamic atmosphere in which pupils develop their full academic learning potential'. There is a strong emphasis on preparing pupils for the future including taking their place in a diverse cultural society. There are no pupils with learning difficulties and or disabilities. For the great majority of pupils English is an additional language.

## Evaluation of the school

The school meets nearly all requirements and provides a good education. The headteacher, and all of the staff are totally committed to pupils' success and well-being. Parents have positive views of the school and appreciate especially the balance between religious and secular education. A good curriculum meets the range of pupils' needs and interests and, along with good teaching and assessment, this enables pupils to make good progress. The school's strong ethos combines successfully good academic education and the spiritual framework of Islam so that pupils make outstanding gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff manage pupils exceptionally well and behaviour is excellent as a result. The provision for pupils' health and safety is good.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum for all year groups is good. The school successfully achieves its aims regarding the religious and secular curriculum. The prospectus commits the school to teaching the National Curriculum within an Islamic ethos which provides effectively for Islamic studies and Arabic. The school has a detailed curriculum policy and schemes of work provide a firm basis for subject and lesson planning. Provision for the pupils in Reception class follows closely the Foundation Stage curriculum and planning is detailed for each area of learning. This enables the youngest children to make a good start to their education.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, effective planning continues in most respects to promote the pupils' good progress. Subject planning clearly sets out what will be taught, how and when. Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy are planned particularly well. Work in all subjects is usually well-matched to the range of abilities in each year group. The range of resources to support the curriculum is adequate.

National Curriculum subjects are taught each morning and in a few periods in the afternoon sessions. Islamic Studies and Arabic are generally taught each afternoon. Overall, sufficient time is allocated to each subject with appropriate time given to literacy and numeracy each day. Many opportunities are taken to promote reading, writing, speaking and listening, which supports the excellent progress many pupils make in literacy. The pupils' personal development is promoted very effectively through Islamic studies, and personal, social and health education in all classes. This results in pupils being very well-mannered and considerate individuals.

Provision for physical education (PE) is satisfactory and the school makes good use of the local amenities for PE. Weekly swimming lessons are provided separately for boys and girls in accordance with parental wishes. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. The school has a suitable range of equipment available in the ICT suite. However, these resources are not timetabled and are underused by a few classes.

The school provides some extra-curricular activities, mainly in sports for boys and girls. An art club is due to start and Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils will be invited to attend. Out-of-school visits, such as to museums and the bakery, help to promote pupils' understanding in some of the topics taught in school.

Islamic education is outstanding. Routines for the remembrance of Allah, prayers, fasting and raising awareness about Islam are very well established.

Teaching and learning is consistently good across the school as a result of excellent arrangements for induction, mentoring and professional development. Lesson planning is thorough and provides clear details of how the work is matched to the range of abilities in classes, with the exception of the most able pupils. Lessons are well structured and include good introductions and reviews at the end. Adults work together effectively and the pace of work is brisk. Teaching at its best was observed in a Key Stage 2 English lesson where pupils were rapidly developing an ability to write creatively. The lesson was so successful because pupils loved role playing, and expressing the feelings of characters. This resulted in very good speaking and excellent use of body language by pupils which they channelled into colourful descriptive words in their writing. Teaching in literacy is very effective and this was reflected in the 2007 test results at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the school realises that it is not challenging the most able pupils in mathematics and science, and this too was evident in the results.

Assessment procedures are good. An initial assessment in the core subjects is carried out by the class teacher for each pupil and this is followed by regular assessment at the end of each term. Information is used well to plan the curriculum. Pupils' workbooks are regularly marked and teachers give pupils good guidance about how to improve their work.

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

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Consequently, pupils develop into mature, thoughtful and considerate young people. They are encouraged to examine the impact of their actions on others and have very good chances to discuss their faith, behaviour and everyday events. This helps pupils to develop a very high level of self-awareness, sensitivity and respect for others. As a result, they are very well prepared for the future. Islamic studies have a significant impact on personal development. In discussions and in lessons, the older pupils show a clear spiritual and moral understanding of issues in their lives and the lives of others. For example, when pupils were learning a verse from the Qu'ran, entitled '*The Fig*', they showed their deep understanding of the implicit moral messages. These concern the need to treasure pupils' special position in creation, as human beings and always maintaining a sense of humility.

Pupils make a strong contribution to the community. The School Council enables pupils to learn very well about democracy, decision-making and public institutions. Pupils have made good suggestions to improve the school. For instance, pupils have provided good ideas for developing the school grounds and fundraising activities.

A very well developed system of reward for good behaviour and constant praise for effort has resulted in excellent attitudes towards learning and outstanding behaviour. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is exceptional as is evident in observations and discussions with them. Attendance is satisfactory. There is no truancy but the overall rate of attendance is brought down by extended absence for compelling cultural and family reasons.

Pupils' awareness of their own culture is very strong and they show high levels of respect for the values, traditions and beliefs of others. Very strong links in the community make a significant contribution to promoting harmony between different cultures. For instance, a representative from the local community has given talks about Christianity and this helped pupils to compare religious beliefs and identify similarities.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

There is good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils are well cared for and all the required records and policies are in place. This includes policies and procedures for child protection and the safeguarding of pupils. The school has implemented systems to identify and manage potential risks to safety regarding

educational visits, accommodation matters and lessons. Health and safety education is good. Pupils have a good appreciation of how to lead healthy lifestyles. An extensive and effective health initiative, which included many useful learning activities was highly successful last year. Community links make a significant contribution to raising awareness about safety, for instance, the police and fire services regularly give talks in school. The anti-bullying policy is effective. Both pupils and parents say that bullying is not a problem.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and these have been satisfactorily completed. Recruitment procedures comply with the regulations. The school maintains a single central record of all the checks required on staff and others including Criminal Records Bureau checks.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school is situated close to the centre of Blackburn and accommodates adequately the number of pupils on roll. The premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn effectively and safely. The school comprises the main building which includes most classrooms, an assembly area, office space, ICT suite and reading room. There is sufficient space for outdoor play. However, debris collects and the frequency of sweeping of outdoor areas is not fully effective in removing this. Two of the classrooms are located in the adjacent Mosque. All classrooms have stimulating displays of pupils' work and helpful information to support learning. A good number of pupils do their prayers at the Mosque and many attend in the evenings for additional Qu'ran tuition. Parents and pupils greatly value the close proximity of the school to the Mosque because they feel this adds to the very strong Islamic ethos of the school.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has a helpful and purposeful prospectus which provides all the information required for parents and prospective parents.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school's policy and procedures are clear and fair.

## 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 the one stated below.

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

- ensure that the outdoor areas of the school are maintained in a tidy and clean state (paragraph 5(n)).

## 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:

- develop more challenging opportunities for the most able pupils to attain higher standards in mathematics and science
- provide timetabled lessons for pupils to use the ICT suite and ensure that they all make good use of this resource to develop their skills.

## School details

Name of school	Al-Asr Primary School		
DCSF number	889/6006		
Unique reference number	131983		
Type of school	Primary Faith		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2001		
Age range of pupils	4-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 51	Girls: 55	Total: 106
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,200		
Address of school	60 St Silas Road Blackburn Lancashire BB2 6JX		
Telephone number	01254 696933		
Fax number	01254 668020		
Email address	<a href="mailto:alasschool@yahoo.co.uk">alasschool@yahoo.co.uk</a>		
Headteacher	Mrs N Hameed		
Proprietor	Committee of Al-Asr Primary School		
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain AI		
Dates of inspection	8-9 January 2008		