

Al-Furqan Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131465
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	341144
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Carolyn Carnaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amjad Ahmed
Headteacher	Zahida Hussain and Farzana Mohammed
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent three quarters of their time looking at learning and observed 16 lessons, held meetings with pupils, governors, teachers and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's documents, policies, safeguarding arrangements and received 54 questionnaire responses from parents and carers .

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- variations in the progress and attainment of pupils across all Key Stages, particularly for girls and more able pupils
- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation
- factors that promote pupils' personal development

Information about the school

Al-Furqan Primary School is slightly larger than average and all its pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A very high proportion of pupils do not speak English as their first language. The school has a below average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The largest group of these pupils has moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school holds a number of awards, including Artsmark Silver.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Al-Furqan school provides a satisfactory education. Pupils are very happy at school and their parents and carers are extremely pleased with the ways the school supports and cares for their children. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory but there are some weaknesses in lesson planning, the accuracy and use of assessment and in the way the school evaluates itself. Teaching is generally satisfactory but lessons are sometimes too teacher-led. Pupils enjoy their lessons when they are allowed to work independently and this they do very well, particularly when they are encouraged to cooperate and share ideas. Pupils are safe at school and the leaders have ensured safeguarding procedures are very robust. The local community benefits from having the school in its neighbourhood and pupils interact very effectively with members of a range of places of worship and other organisations.

Children come into Reception with lower than expected skills in language and are slightly below expectations in all other aspects. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and, in 2009, progress in Key Stage 2 was also satisfactory. However, this has not been the case every year and girls have not done quite as well as boys in this key stage. Pupils leave school with broadly average standards and those with special educational needs and/or difficulties make slightly better progress than their peers.

Progress in mathematics has been good and better than that for English and science in Key Stage 2. However, pupils have not always reached their predicted outcomes across all subjects, particularly those who are more able. The contribution of teaching to learning is inconsistent because assessment is not always accurate or put to good use. Teachers do not consistently identify pupils' needs and abilities vigilantly enough so that lessons are planned with these details in mind. The focus on whole class teaching sometimes reduces the pace of lessons. Work is occasionally insufficiently challenging for more able pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because the school ensures they have opportunities to explore the way people from around the world live, create art and get on together. The many artworks displayed around the school and the music and drama that take place are testament to pupils' keen interest in these subjects. There is a good curriculum that provides well for pupils' understanding of other cultures and they make excellent links with other schools and communities both in the United Kingdom and beyond.

The school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement. Its self-evaluation is sometimes too generous; however, it does identify appropriate areas for improvement such as the need to improve pupils' reading skills. The school's development plan provides a

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satisfactory template for continuing improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of lesson planning and assessment so that the needs of all pupils, particularly girls and the more able, are effectively met.
 - Improve the rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and most say they enjoy their lessons. They do better in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 than they do in English, particularly the boys, who enjoy the challenges that mathematics has to offer. Pupils' attainment has fallen slightly in Key Stage 1 but is still broadly average here and in Key Stage 2. There is little variation between groups of pupils, although girls do not progress quite as well in Key Stage 2. Pupils from the Pakistani ethnic group do better than their peers nationally.

Progress in Key Stage 1 is better than in later year groups since the relatively weaker skills in English hold some pupils back in writing. The school has focused attention on mathematics and writing and this is showing results; now, it has turned its attention to reading and pupils enjoy lessons where paired and whole class reading is the focus. This has yet to show results in raised attainment.

Pupils say they feel safe and that there is little bullying; where this might occur, they know who will help them to sort things out. Pupils are confident and behaviour is good. Where pupils are allowed to work on individual and paired tasks, they are generally confident at taking personal responsibility. Pupils understand the need to eat well and the school council has asked school staff to help make the lunchtimes go better by serving them their lunches. Staff have agreed to this, and now lunches go smoothly, without any queuing. Pupils take regular sport and exercise, take part in activities at lunchtimes and after school and enjoy playing outside when they can. Pupils have particular pride in their connections with their community; there are links with the mosque that is on the school site, with other places of worship and with several other schools from a range of faiths. The school is a force for cohesion in its local area and pupils are encouraged actively to promote community, racial and social harmony. Tolerance is the accepted norm at Al-Furqan.

Pupils develop workplace skills satisfactorily and they have good opportunities to enjoy using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) both in and out of lessons. The attendance levels are above average, pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and when they go on family trips away from school, they are provided with learning packs to help them continue with their studies.

Pupils develop high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness that they

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show in their regular acts of worship, their understanding of their own religion, their knowledge of the people of the world and its cultures. Pupils make extensive and excellent artwork and they enjoy music, such as in drumming club, and drama, which they sometimes use in lessons and shows.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils enjoy lessons, behave well and come into classrooms ready to learn. Marking of work is satisfactory. Some pupils are developing skills in how to assess one another's work and this improves their understanding of the next steps in their own learning.

Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, it is inconsistent. Where there is good practice, teachers are enthusiastic and plan interesting activities. In these better lessons, teachers' inputs are brief and to the point, so pupils are given good opportunities to work independently. However, in other lessons, the teachers' plans do not reflect what pupils should learn and how they will reach their learning goals. Where teaching is less effective, teachers talk for too long. Pupils find this less interesting and, because they have too few opportunities to work independently, their progress slows. The school has

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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good facilities for ICT but teachers sometimes miss opportunities to use it in lessons. Assessment is not always used as effectively as it might be. Teachers do not fully utilise what they know about the abilities of their pupils to focus their teaching on the learning outcomes. This holds back the most able pupils and does not give opportunities for girls to achieve quite so well as boys, particularly in Key Stage 2.

The good curriculum provides opportunities to study a range of subjects, including Arabic. Topic based work is usually tackled every afternoon and, in general, the whole school looks at an area of interest, such as archaeology, and develops the theme in different ways, sometimes linking it with a trip to a museum, gallery or theatre. English, mathematics and science are studied in the mornings and these frequently take the topic areas further. Supported reading is a focus of current efforts to raise attainment in English, with whole class sharing of reading fictional and Islamic books, individual reading aloud and memorising being features of the learning activities. Every pupil enjoys two hours of physical education. A range of activities that pupils can choose from enriches the curriculum, at lunchtimes and after school. These include chess, ICT and cooking.

There is very close communication with carers and families, so teachers know their charges well. Whilst emotional and pastoral support is clearly effective, inconsistencies in assessment, and the way this information is used, are sometimes less effective. Pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties are well supported by the team of teaching assistants and teachers who focus their attention on their learning, both in lessons and out. Sometimes pupils are taught to use sign language, for example, where their vocal communication is difficult. These interventions make a clear difference to the enjoyment and success of these pupils at school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Although senior leaders monitor teaching and planning of lessons, this is not always as effective in driving up attainment as it might be. The school's self-evaluations have been too generous in the past. Inconsistencies in teaching have not been rectified; for example, where teachers with English as a second language make mistakes in spelling and grammar when teaching English, or in their lesson support materials, managers have not picked this up. The good teaching of many members of the staff has not been shared as thoroughly as it could be through continuing professional development.

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Assessments have not always been recorded every time they are called for, so the progress of pupils is not always clear. This limits the focused planning for learning. The governing body provides a satisfactory level of support and challenge for the school. Governors are highly appreciated by parents and carers and teachers and are very visible around school. They work for the success of the pupils, their families and carers through well-structured committees. However, governors do not fully understand the extent of the school's strengths and areas for development, such as in the monitoring of teaching, so they have not challenged the senior team of leaders quite enough to ensure pupils are getting the best from their school.

The school has good links with a range of partners who help with, for example, supporting communication skills, speech and language and educational psychology. Parents and carers are encouraged to stay in close communication and there are reading and support workshops for them. Equal opportunities are high priority at Al-Furqan and this is evident in the way pupils talk about school. The school has not made the progress of girls enough of a focus, however. Safeguarding procedures and policies are highly effective and school managers have been rigorous in this regard. The community cohesion of the school, the parents and carers, the local mosque and area is very strong and pupils understand how important this is. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how people live across the country and the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

All adults support children's learning and personal development well and this ensures

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that they make good progress. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are slightly below the expected levels for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children enjoy their learning and progress well from these starting points and by the time they leave the Reception class their aptitudes are better than expected for their age in all areas. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This good achievement is promoted by the way children work so well, both together and independently.

Children are active and inquisitive learners and keen to rise to the challenges that their teachers give them. They develop a good understanding of what is needed to grow up healthily and how to stay safe. There is planned, purposeful learning, both indoors and out and teachers organise the day well to maintain a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. However, sometimes, there are too few stimulating resources available to the children in the outdoor learning area. Probing questioning and other informal assessments mean that adults are able to keep a close watch on each individual's progress, adjusting what they provide for them as appropriate.

Good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage have addressed areas of concern, such as children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff and resources are well deployed to maximise opportunities and the care of children. Children are well cared for and their safeguarding is very good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are very positive about their children's safety and how well the school supports their learning. They had no significant concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Al-Furqan Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 289 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	85	8	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	87	7	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	85	8	15	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	80	11	20	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	81	10	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	89	6	11	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	85	7	13	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	81	8	15	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	85	8	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	81	10	19	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	80	11	20	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	80	11	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	89	6	11	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Al-Furqan Primary School, Birmingham, B11 3EY

We enjoyed visiting you when we recently came to inspect your school. We particularly enjoyed the way you got on so well together and how well you worked together in topic lessons. We thought you were confident and proud of your school and the local community and you behave well. You have found out about how other people live around the area, the country and the world and you are developing very well into caring young people.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education and there are many things to be proud of. However, we have asked your school to make some changes so you can get on better at school:

- plan lessons better and improve how staff check up on your work, so everyone is doing the best they can
- make sure the school checks up on itself more thoroughly so it knows and understands its strengths and weaknesses

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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