

Inspection of Al-Ashraf Primary School

Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, Stratton Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL1 4HB

Inspection dates: 10–12 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and friendly school. Senior leaders greet pupils and their parents and carers with a genuine warmth at the start of each school day. Pupils and parents are highly positive about the school. Most parents are extremely supportive of the school. They were keen to share their positive comments with the inspectors. 'My child loves school and is doing well,' is typical of many comments.

Teachers set high standards of behaviour. Pupils enjoy an orderly school environment. They are well behaved and polite. Pupils take part in lessons with a wide-eyed enthusiasm. They study a broad curriculum and learn without disruption. Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics and reading.

Pupils are knowledgeable about, and considerate of the views and beliefs of others. They discuss topical issues with confidence and sensitivity. Pupils get on well together in lessons and at social times. They feel safe here and value the care that staff give them. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen here.

Pupils enjoy the many lunchtime clubs and are keen to take on responsibilities such as those of anti-bullying ambassadors. They take part in activities that support community projects, including visits to the elderly, distributing gifts at Christmas and Sport Relief.

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

The school benefits from dedicated and knowledgeable leaders. They know the school well. Governors and senior leaders understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They have sustained their work to ensure that all the independent schools standards (ISS) are met. The school premises are well maintained. Previous weaknesses have been eradicated. Senior leaders have designed and put in place an ambitious curriculum, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Governors know the school well. They visit frequently to check on how well the school is doing.

The headteacher leads with humility and integrity. She ensures that staff training helps pupils' welfare and learning. All staff feel valued. Leaders carefully manage staff workload.

The curriculum is rooted in the school's faith-based ethos. Pupils learn about Islamic and British values through meaningful experiences and reflection on AKHLAQ (Appreciation, Kindness, Honesty, Love, Ambition and Quality). The curriculum is packed with opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about the wider world, including other faiths. Visits to many places of worship and visitors to school provide exciting experiences. As a result, pupils learn about culture and science. They understand what it is to be a good citizen.

The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in phonics and reading in all year groups. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff liaise closely with families and health visitors. As a result, when children join the school, staff quickly develop children's language and listening skills. The few pupils who join the school at different times of the year catch up quickly. Nonetheless, leaders are not complacent. They continue to refine their approaches to support pupils' life-long love of reading.

Children in Nursery thrive. They are eager to explore and find out new things, and they stick at tasks without giving up. They listen attentively. Children are friendly. They work well together. They are confident to approach adults if they need help. Staff make close checks on children's development and are adept at shaping the curriculum to help children to excel.

Leaders have also made sure that learning is well planned in subjects such as mathematics and science. Leaders give teachers clear guidance and make close checks to ensure that their advice is implemented. In these subjects, important ideas and areas of learning are taught in the right order. This helps pupils to know and remember more. However, leaders' work in other areas of the curriculum, such as geography, history and physical education (PE), is less well developed. Curriculum plans include the right subject content. However, the depth of knowledge is lacking. Planning is at a superficial level. As a result, pupils have some gaps in the necessary skills and knowledge.

Leaders and teachers have taken effective action to improve pupils' writing, including in early years. Pupils make good vocabulary choices to make their writing interesting for the reader. However, some pupils do not apply some of their learning consistently enough because they forget key points. They do not apply what they already know consistently when using punctuation. Teachers' recent efforts to develop children's hand control is paying off. Children now hold a pencil correctly. However, their poor letter formation hinders the fluency of their writing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know how to keep children safe. The regular updates for staff from leaders give them information about risks to watch out for. In addition, leaders make regular checks to ensure that staff understand and remember the safeguarding information given.

All staff, including those with designated responsibility for safeguarding, know pupils and their families well. They are vigilant in their oversight of pupils' welfare and safety. Leaders are proactive in contacting external agencies so that pupils and their families receive early help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's curriculum is not yet planned coherently in every subject. It is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan and train staff in how to deliver the curriculum that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is well planned and implemented in every subject so that pupils know and remember more in every subject of the national curriculum.
- Leaders' work to establish how well the writing curriculum is implemented is not developed fully. Leaders do not routinely assure themselves that teachers' plans, including in early years, are delivered consistently well. Leaders need to have a better understanding of the implementation of the writing curriculum, so they are confident that pupils apply their knowledge of spelling and punctuation in all writing.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	135097
DfE registration number	916/6081
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10090665
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Number of part-time pupils	43
Proprietor	Al-Madani Educational Trust
Chair	Abdullah Patel
Headteacher	Zainab Patel
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,000
Telephone number	01452 503 533
Website	http://primary.al-ashraf.org.uk/
Email address	zpatel@al-ashraf.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–28 November 2017

Information about this school

- Al-Ashraf Primary School opened in 2006. It is an independent Muslim day school for boys and girls aged from two to 11 years.
- The Al-Madani Education Trust operates the school. The trustees have delegated governance of the school to the governing body.
- The headteacher has been in place since the end of May 2019.
- The school is in the Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, a three-storey building close to the centre of Gloucester. Most pupils are from Indian, Bangladeshi or Pakistani backgrounds, with smaller numbers from a range of different backgrounds.

- The school aims to provide education based on the national curriculum and in keeping with Islamic morals and ethics.
- Ofsted judged the school to be inadequate at the previous standard inspection in November 2017. A progress monitoring inspection in June 2019 verified that previously unmet standards had been met.
- Most pupils who attend the school speak English as an additional language.
- No pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- We met with the headteacher, senior leaders and teachers. The lead inspector met with the chair and three other members of the governing body.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing, science, PE and personal, social and health education (PSHE). We also looked further into the quality of education pupils receive in geography. In each of these subjects, we met with teachers, considered curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and considered pupils' written work.
- We scrutinised the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, including the safeguarding policy.
- We met with parents to gain their views of the school. We also considered parents' views via the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text comments.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Ofsted Inspector

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