

# Al-Ashraf Primary School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Al-Ashraf Primary is an independent Islamic day school for boys and girls aged from four to 11 years. The school is run by the Al-Madani Educational Trust and is registered for 125 pupils. At the time of the inspection there were 124 on roll: 27 children in the Reception class, 97 pupils in Years 1 to 4 and no pupils in Years 5 and 6. The aims of the school are:

'to provide the highest standards of education to our children within a rich, spiritual Islamic environment, thus helping to create devout Muslims and responsible citizens who will move on to become an asset for the Muslim community and wider British society at large'.

The school is located in the Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, close to the centre of Gloucester. It opened in 2006 and shares the site, administration and management with the Al-Ashraf Nursery which is separately registered. It was inspected at the same time and will be reported on separately. All of the pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a few of them are at an early stage of learning English. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs and a very small number of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school was last inspected in October 2007.

## Evaluation of the school

Al-Ashraf Primary provides a satisfactory quality of education. It meets all the regulatory requirements which is an improvement from the time of the last inspection. All the points for development outlined in the previous report have been tackled with some success. The school successfully meets its aims. The school's strengths include: the good overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage; good pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and the good promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety, including secure safeguarding procedures. Pupils' behaviour is good and they make satisfactory progress. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory as is the curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

## Quality of education

The satisfactory curriculum has a suitable policy and sound plans for all subjects except for music which is in keeping with the school's Islamic faith status. Schemes of work and plans are appropriately based on the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements for the younger children and the National Curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education are suitably planned and effectively interwoven with Islamic values. The school's religious ethos is appropriately supported by regular, informal references to Islamic teaching throughout the school day and in the relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are securely planned. The school uses its limited outdoor space and the generous-sized hall well to ensure pupils receive regular physical education (PE) activities and lessons. Regular educational visits take place both locally and further afield including to a local library and Cotswold Farm Park. Visitors are regularly invited to the school to extend pupils' learning. During the inspection the pupils enjoyed a visit from a tender and crew from the local Fire and Rescue Service.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. There is a mixed picture of good and satisfactory practice across the school. In the Reception class and Key Stage 1 there is a higher proportion of good teaching because of the more established planning and assessment processes. The school has grown in size since the last inspection and now incorporates two Key Stage 2 classes. The Year 3 class commenced at the beginning of September 2009 and the Year 4 class is in its first few weeks of existence. As a result, practice in Key Stage 2 is developing and is not yet consistent with the rest of the school. Where teaching is good, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan well-structured lessons. The beginning of lessons are clearly explained which is an improvement from the last inspection. Pupils of different abilities are identified and provided with activities which match their needs. When this occurs, pupils make good progress. Teaching assistants are well deployed and support pupils' learning through good questioning and effective use of practical resources such as games to develop numeracy and literacy skills. In the less effective lessons, teachers' explanations are often too long, hindering especially the progress of more able pupils. Lesson plans and activities do not match the specific needs of different abilities. As a result, pupils' progress is delayed, especially for the more able. The small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the additional support they receive from the recently-appointed special educational needs coordinator.

The use of assessment across the school is satisfactory. There are effective whole-school systems which track all pupils' progress and measure their achievements against predicted levels and outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics. The school has improved this aspect which was highlighted for development at the time of the last inspection, but it is not yet fully embedded. Consequently, the analysis of this assessment information is underdeveloped and the data provided are not used consistently by all teachers to identify different groups and abilities of learners and to

match activities accordingly. Marking in books is regular and conscientious and there are some examples of targets being set for individual pupils. However, this practice is not consistent across the school and, as a result, not all pupils are reaching their expected levels, especially those capable of higher levels of attainment. This often leads to underachievement as they are not sufficiently challenged. Consequently, their progress is satisfactory overall.

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the older pupils, the school's Islamic ethos and values effectively support their moral, spiritual and cultural guidance. An example of the promotion of these values can be seen in the school's reorganisation of the school day to integrate the madrassah. Pupils' social development is good. As a result, they enjoy school, are friendly, welcoming and their behaviour is good. Their attendance rates are above average. The school ensures that pupils' understanding of other people's faiths and beliefs are taught through religious education lessons and links with different schools. Pupils are tolerant, understanding and have good attitudes towards their learning. Their secure basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT contribute effectively to their future economic well-being. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community through accepting responsibilities to help others and their teachers. They have raised funds for the Haiti earthquake disaster, children in South Africa and the daffodil appeal for cancer. In questionnaires and conversations with inspectors, pupils say they feel safe and know who to go to if they are worried. There are a range of opportunities for pupils to learn about public institutions in England through visits which include those from the police and ambulance services.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The provision for the safeguarding of pupils' welfare, health and safety is good, including that for children in the Reception class. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when two regulations regarding training for safeguarding and health and risk assessments were not met. The school has successfully addressed these issues and has secure health and safety policies and safeguarding procedures in place. In line with the school's policies and procedures, all staff have received the required child protection training. There are almost no incidents of bullying and no exclusions of any type. Pupils have good awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles and there are regular opportunities for them to be physically active during PE lessons and break times. The school has been conscientious in carrying out risk assessments for both on- and off-site activities. There is an appropriate development plan to support the regulatory requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school has effectively carried out the required checks on all staff and governors prior to their appointment to make sure there is no reason why they should not be employed to work with children. All the required checks are recorded in a single central register.

## **Premises of and accommodation at the school**

The school's premises and accommodation meet all the regulatory requirements. The school site has been developed further since the last inspection. As a result, there has been an increase in the educational facilities provided. The classrooms are in good condition and adequate for the curriculum and numbers on roll, including those for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The limited outdoor spaces are appropriate for playtimes and games and the hall is adequate for PE lessons and gymnastic work. The school has a suitably equipped and maintained ICT suite.

## **Provision of information**

The school provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information for current and prospective parents and carers, inspectors, Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE) on request. This is an area of improvement from the previous inspection. There is a clear and helpful prospectus and website. A very high proportion of the large number of parental questionnaires returned were very positive, indicating that the parents hold the school in high regard.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's complaints procedure meets the requirements.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The effective transition arrangements ensure children settle in well to the Reception class from the on-site nursery and make good progress over time. Consequently, outcomes are good. The school's formal assessments and observations and children's' work seen during the inspection indicate that children make good progress from their low starting points. As a result, by the time they start Key Stage 1 nearly all of them have developed the skills and knowledge which match age-related expectations. However, informal assessment is not frequent enough to capitalise on the gains children make during learning activities. Provision is good. The good quality of teaching provides activities that are well planned to ensure a good mix of teacher-planned and child-led learning. There is a good mixture of indoor and outdoor activity with appropriate resources. The curriculum is enhanced through the effective teaching of spoken and written Arabic. The few children who are at the early stages of learning English are supported well due to the effective bi-lingual support and make good progress. The staff are well qualified and, although the Reception teacher

is recently appointed, the close and effective working relationships between both the nursery and Year 1 staff has ensured the good leadership of the setting has been maintained. This has resulted in good teamwork and strong, supportive links with the parents.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 (‘the Regulations’).

## **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- Analyse whole-school assessment information regularly to monitor pupils’ progress more effectively.
- Ensure assessment information is used consistently by teachers in their planning and lessons so that all pupils can make good progress, especially the more able.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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### The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim		
<b>Date school opened</b>	2006		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 64	Girls: 60	Total: 124
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£ 700		
<b>Address of school</b>	Stratton Road Gloucester Gloucestershire GL1 4HB		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01452 503533		
<b>Email address</b>	iacademy@yahoo.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Abdullah Patel		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Al-Madani Educational Trust		