

Al-Hijrah School

Cherrywood Centre, Burbidge Road, Birmingham, B9 4US

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The achievement of pupils is too variable, particularly in English, because teaching is not consistently good.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not as good as it should be.
- Some teachers do not use the information about pupils' progress well enough to plan lessons. As a result, pupils are sometimes given work to do that is too hard or too easy.
- Teachers do not regularly check that pupils have acted on the advice given from marking and feedback.
- The headteacher is not fully involved in leading improvements in teaching and achievement. This results in the work of leaders and managers being uncoordinated and the variations in achievement.
- Leaders do not have an accurate way of judging the overall progress that pupils make during the year.
- Not all subject and key stage leaders are as effective as they should be in improving teaching and achievement.
- Leaders have not implemented a robust system for identifying which pupils have special educational needs.
- Governors have not managed the schools' financial resources well and they do not have a shared understanding of the schools' strategic direction.
- Some parents feel that the school does not listen adequately to their views.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good, and often outstanding progress across the school in mathematics as a result of teaching which is good and better.
- Achievement is improving as a result of more teaching which is good, even though teaching is still too variable.
- Pupils make good progress in the Reception classes.
- Pupils behave well and relationships across the school are a strength. The religious character of the school pervades all aspects of school life and pupils are courteous, well mannered and polite.
- Senior leaders have begun to improve teaching and achievement because they are monitoring this better than they have in the past.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders. The inspection team also made short visits to lessons as part of themed learning walks.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and school staff, including those responsible for subjects and senior leaders. The lead inspector met with a group of parents as well as a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 64 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection. The lead inspector held two telephone conversations with parents who had requested this.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' progress and samples of pupils' work.
- One inspector listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hilary Green	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Plumb	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Bird	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized all-through school.
- The school is an Islamic school and priority admission arrangements are in place for pupils practising the Islamic faith.
- All pupils are from minority ethnic heritages.
- The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is a much higher than average proportion.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school works in partnership with a local alternative education provider called 'Righttrack' and a small number of pupils in the secondary phase are able to study vocational courses with this provider.
- The school became an all-through school in January 2012 and this joined a secondary and a primary school together.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and better in all phases and subjects by:
 - using information on pupils' achievement to always set work for pupils that is always matched to their different abilities
 - ensuring that pupils are given opportunities to act on the advice given by teachers through marking and feedback
 - developing questioning skills so that questions are pitched at the right level for different pupils to enable them to develop their thinking skills
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants fully meet the individual needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the headteacher is responsible for leading and securing improvements in teaching and learning
 - the skills of those responsible for leading subjects and key stages are developed so that teaching and achievement are consistently and accurately monitored
 - pupils' progress is monitored in the same way in all key stages and that it accurately reflects the achievement of individual pupils at key points during the year
 - the leadership of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is consistent across all key stages and that there is robust and rigorous identification of pupils with special educational needs
 - establishing appropriately regular opportunities for parents to share their views about the school in meetings as well as through questionnaires.

- Improve governance by ensuring that:
 - financial resources are managed effectively
 - there is a shared understanding about the schools’ strategic direction.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The proportion of pupils in the secondary phase achieving five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was below average in 2012. This is much lower than it has been in previous years. The main reason for this was because achievement in English was far too low.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in English as they do in mathematics in all phases. This is because there is consistently good mathematics teaching but inconsistencies in the quality of English teaching. Achievement is better in reading than it is in writing. Pupils make good progress in science, religious education and foreign languages.
- In the secondary phase in 2012, pupils supported by the pupil premium achieved, on average, around half a grade lower than other pupils nationally in English. However, they achieved, on average, almost a grade higher than other pupils nationally in mathematics. Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium were half a term behind other pupils in reading but half a term ahead in mathematics.
- The school has used its additional pupil premium funding to hold revision classes and a range of out-of-hours learning activities. These have had a positive impact on achievement in mathematics but not in English in the secondary phase.
- The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is not consistently good. For example, this group of pupils achieve well in reading in Key Stage 1 but poorly in English in Key Stage 4. Their achievement in mathematics is typically good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not achieve as well as they should. This is because teachers and teaching assistants do not always have detailed information on the needs of individual pupils. In addition, not all teachers and teaching assistants are fully trained to meet the needs of some of these pupils.
- The off-site provision, 'Righttrack', is ensuring that attendance and achievement is improving for the small number of pupils who attend.
- Attainment in English and mathematics by the end of the primary phase in 2012 was higher than the national average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing.
- Achievement overall is improving as a result of more effective monitoring and opportunities for teachers to share good practice. Achievement is stronger in the primary phase than the secondary phase and it is good in the Reception classes.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough is consistently good and better. This is why achievement is variable.
- Teaching does not regularly use assessment information on pupils to plan lessons which are specifically matched to what individual pupils need to learn next. This sometimes results in pupils being given work that is too hard or too easy.

- Teachers usually mark pupils' work and set them targets for improvement. However, teachers do not consistently provide pupils with opportunities to follow up the targets and advice that is given. Consequently, marking does not help to support improvements in achievement as well as it could.
- Some teaching does not use questioning as effectively as it could because it often only requires short responses from pupils or is not matched to the ability of pupils. Consequently, questioning does not always help pupils to develop their thinking skills.
- Not all teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary skills to help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make consistently good progress.
- The quality of teaching is improving as a result of better monitoring by senior leaders and opportunities for staff to share good practice by planning, teaching and reflecting on lessons together.
- During the inspection, inspectors observed some good teaching. In these lessons, teachers ensured that pupils were appropriately challenged and that they were clear about what they were learning. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, the work was pitched at the right level which met the pupils' needs and resulted in rapid progress and high levels of engagement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils predominantly behave well in lessons and at break times, and they have good attitudes to learning. School records confirm that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour.
- Staff manage behaviour well and consistently, and they expect high standards at all times. As a result of this, as well as the desire of most pupils to behave well, the number of exclusions has reduced in recent years and they are low in comparison with other schools.
- Pupils attend regularly and the majority of pupils are polite, courteous and well mannered.
- Pupils respect the religious character of the school and this contributes significantly towards the high levels of mutual respect between pupils. Pupils get on well with each other and show respect to others, regardless of age, race and disability. Staff model positive, respectful relationships at all times.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and they have a good understanding of safety issues. They are confident that behaviour is usually good and inspectors agree.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They say that bullying does sometimes occur but it is rare. They are clear that if bullying does occur, teachers deal with issues well. School records support this view. However, some parents do not agree.
- Pupils appreciate the high levels of care and support that they receive from adults. The school works well with pupils who need additional support.
- The reason why the behaviour and safety of pupils are not outstanding is because a few parents and staff feel that behaviour and bullying are not always dealt with as well as they should be.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is not as involved in the leadership of teaching and learning as he should be and, as a result, the work of leaders and managers is not coordinated well enough. The primary and secondary phases are not managed in a consistent way and each has different systems and procedures. Leaders and managers have not developed a clear and fully understood 'all-through' vision for the school quickly enough.
- Pupil progress monitoring does not identify the progress that pupils are making at key points during the year because it is focused on predicting what pupils may achieve at the end of the key stage. Therefore, it is not possible for leaders and managers to identify, specifically, where pupils are falling behind and so tackle any underachievement quickly.
- The system for regularly monitoring teaching and achievement involving all subject and phase leaders is having a positive impact. However, the quality of subject and phase leadership is inconsistent and so the accuracy of this monitoring is not entirely reliable.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary skills to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In addition, the school does not have a robust system for identifying and assessing pupils who may have special educational needs.
- The school does not have a system for meeting with parents so that they can express their views about the school. A few parents expressed this concern to inspectors.
- The setting of targets for teachers to improve their teaching is not consistently good as they do not always relate to specific aspects of teaching and are not always linked to the training needs of individual teachers.
- The school has begun entering pupils in Key Stage 4 for GCSE English early and this is a good strategy which is enabling pupils to achieve better results than previously.
- Leaders have appropriate plans for spending the Year 7 catch-up premium, which is new additional funding to support pupils who have not made the expected attainment in English and mathematics in Year 6.
- The headteacher provides a strong focus on ensuring that the religious identity of the school is maintained and developed.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate level of support to the school and this has begun to have an impact through increasing the amount of good teaching but it has failed to address the inconsistencies in leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is aware of the main strengths and areas for improvement in the school. It has not managed the schools' financial resources well and this has resulted in a significant overspend. Financial procedures in the school are now better managed and organised but there is no strategic plan to reduce the deficit budget. The governing body does have an understanding of how the pupil premium is spent and it is aware of the impact that this funding has on the achievement of eligible pupils. The governing body has not been involved in monitoring teachers' targets and, consequently, how these relate to pay rises for teachers. However, they are aware of this and are now monitoring how teachers' targets and pay are

linked to pupil achievement. Not all governors have a shared and clear understanding of the schools' strategic direction and this has a direct impact on the inconsistencies in leadership, achievement and teaching. The governing body makes sure that the school fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133306
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400217

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	780
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mohammed Hanif
Headteacher	Mak Saqib
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
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