

Islamic Preparatory School Wolverhampton

197 Waterloo Road, Dunstall Hill, Wolverhampton WV1 4RA

Inspection dates

7–8 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and on pupils' outcomes are not sufficiently rigorous to tackle weaknesses effectively. As a result, the quality of teaching is not strong enough to ensure good outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers' assessments of what pupils can do, or need to learn next, are sometimes inaccurate. These weaknesses lead to some work being set that is too easy for some pupils and too hard for others. Consequently, pupils do not make good progress or reach high enough standards.
- Some teachers lack the knowledge and skills required to ensure pupils learn consistently well. A few teachers struggle to sustain pupils' interest throughout lessons.
- A lack of appropriate resources prevents teachers from delivering some lessons effectively, and impedes pupils' progress.
- Pupils' behaviour deteriorates in lessons when work does not capture their attention or when the teacher does not explain tasks clearly. This leads to some low-level disruption which, in turn, slows down the progress pupils make.
- Assessment in the early years is not used well enough to ensure children make good progress. Limited resources restrict children's opportunities to develop and practise their skills through exploration and play.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and teachers are determined that pupils will contribute positively to the local and wider community. To this end, they are effectively promoting tolerance, understanding and respect for all religions, cultures and institutions within British society.
- Governors, leaders and teachers show a strong commitment to improve in order to provide the very best for the pupils at the school.
- Staff at the school are highly vigilant to the potential dangers that pupils could be exposed to. Pupils are kept safe on the school site. Leaders work proactively with pupils, parents and the wider community to tackle perceptions that could lead to radicalisation and extremism.
- A strong focus, from the early years onwards, on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively helps pupils who do not speak English as their first language to settle quickly into school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (the independent school standards).

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management on the quality of teaching, and on pupils' behaviour and outcomes, by making sure that:
 - leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are used effectively to help teachers improve their practice
 - sufficient quantity and quality of resources are available to teachers so that lessons can be delivered effectively and lead to good progress for pupils
 - systems for tracking pupils' progress lead to prompt remedial action when pupils start to fall behind
 - systems are in place that enable leaders to accurately monitor pupils' behaviour in lessons and to eliminate disruption to learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 in all subjects, including writing and mathematics, in order that pupils make good progress, by enabling teachers to:
 - accurately assess what pupils can do in all subjects
 - identify what each pupil needs to learn next
 - plan tasks that challenge pupils at the correct level
 - provide lessons that appeal to pupils' interests and keep them focused throughout
 - ensure pupils know exactly what they need to do to complete work in lessons and how they can improve their work in future
 - insist on high standards of presentation in pupils' books
 - effectively manage pupils' behaviour in lessons to ensure no learning time is lost.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years provision by ensuring that:
 - sufficient resources of good quality enable children to practise their growing skills through exploration and play
 - all adults consistently use the correct pronunciation when talking to children about the sounds that letters make in words
 - assessments identify clearly whether children's skills are in line with those typical for children of their ages
 - adults rigorously and consistently reinforce children's good behaviour and learning habits.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - Ensure that the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an education, health and care plan (paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i) and 2(1)(b)(ii)).
 - Ensure that the teaching in the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraphs 3 and 3(a)).
 - Ensure that teaching fosters pupils' self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves (paragraphs 3 and 3(b)).
 - Ensure that teaching involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (paragraphs 3 and 3(c)).
 - Ensure that teaching at the school shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraphs 3 and 3(d)).
 - Ensure that teaching demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught (paragraphs 3 and 3(e)).
 - Ensure that teaching utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range (paragraphs 3 and 3(f)).
 - Ensure that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make good progress (paragraphs 3 and 3(g)).
 - Ensure that teaching utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly in all lessons (paragraphs 3 and 3(h)).
 - Ensure that the school's written behaviour policy with regard to pupils' behaviour in lessons is

implemented effectively so that lessons are not interrupted by low-level disruption (paragraphs 9 and 9(b)).

- The proprietor must make sure that leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not secured good academic outcomes for pupils. Leaders have not made sure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment drives the necessary pupils' progress to raise standards.
- The quality of teaching is not improving quickly enough. Leaders do not have a sufficiently precise picture of the strengths of teachers and the areas in which they need to improve. There is no established system to manage teachers' performance or to hold teachers to account for the learning and behaviour of the pupils in their class. As a consequence, pupils' behaviour and the outcomes of their learning are not as good as they should be.
- Professional development is not focused on what will most help each member of staff to improve. Leaders have drawn up appropriate plans to implement such a system, but they are not yet developed.
- Leaders have not kept a close enough check on pupils' progress over time. As a result, leaders have not taken action swiftly enough to speed up the progress of pupils who are falling behind. A new framework for recording and tracking pupils' progress is in the early stages of implementation. It is too soon to determine whether this system will make a difference to pupils' outcomes.
- Teachers are hampered by the lack of suitable quality and quantity of resources to support learning. For example, pupils know how to use a dictionary to find the meanings of unknown words but they do not all have access to one in their classrooms.
- In the early years, the limited availability of toys and play equipment prevents children from developing skills in a variety of situations. As a result, children do not practise what they have been taught.
- The school's curriculum does not fully meet the requirements of the independent school standards. It does not help teachers to make effective provision for pupils with different needs and abilities, including pupils who are supported by an education, health and care plan. Although the curriculum covers all required areas of learning and sets out how each subject will be taught over the year, it does not promote good progress for all pupils.
- The school's leadership has many strengths and a clear strategic vision for the school. Their evaluation of the quality of teaching in the school, as a whole, is broadly accurate. In the past, leaders and governors have taken decisive action to address poor-quality teaching.
- The staff of the school are committed, work hard and are keen to improve their practice for the benefit of pupils.
- The provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a significant strength of the curriculum. Leaders have skilfully incorporated aspects of SMSC and personal, social and health education into the Islamic studies curriculum. This is making a real difference to pupils' preparation for life in modern British society.
- School leaders are outward-looking and have developed partnerships with a number of local community groups. This enhances pupils' experiences. One example is a partnership with the local professional football club, through which the oldest boys and girls in the school receive regular coaching sessions at the club's training ground.
- Fundamental British values are promoted well. The school places great emphasis on the importance of choice, equality, democracy, tolerance and the rule of law. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are developing a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. Much of this comes from information provided for them by leaders rather than through direct experience of seeing the school at work. Governors have identified this as an area for further development.
 - Governors use their knowledge of the school effectively to make strategic decisions to secure the school's future effectiveness. For example, governors made the difficult and contentious decision to reduce the age range of the school in order to maintain the quality of education provided and ensure the school's financial sustainability.
 - Governors use the information they receive about the performance of pupils and quality of teaching to challenge leaders to bring about improvements. Governors and leaders acknowledge that this could be more effective if they had wider and more systematic sources of information to inform these discussions.

- Along with leaders, governors ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils is at the heart of all that the school does.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's policy for safeguarding is kept up to date and is implemented well. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and that systems are in place to respond promptly to any concerns raised about a pupil.
- The processes for recording admissions and attendance are clearly defined and followed consistently. Attendance at the school is similar to national average rates. The improvement in attendance is due to the introduction of more rigorous systems to follow up absence and discourage parents from taking their children on extended holidays during term time. Leaders take prompt action when a pupil leaves the school to track which school the pupil has moved to, and immediately refer any concern to the local authority.
- Leaders are highly vigilant about the potential risks to pupils of radicalisation and extremism. Training has been provided for staff so that they are aware of any possible indicators of concern. Leaders use their links through the wider work of the mosque to promote positive perceptions among the local community and to tackle any misconceptions or negative attitudes. Leaders make careful checks on visitors to the school to be sure that pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not enable pupils to make good progress in many of the subjects taught.
- Teachers set targets for pupils to achieve by the end of the year, based on their assessment of what pupils can do. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that some of these early assessments are too generous. Consequently, the work planned for pupils is sometimes pitched at the wrong level to help pupils take the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers plan work at different levels of difficulty. Nevertheless, pupils' books and inspectors' observations of learning within lessons show that tasks are often too difficult for some pupils and too easy for others. As a consequence, pupils do not make good progress.
- When pupils are confused about what they have to do, they fuss unnecessarily. Valuable learning time is lost when teachers need to repeat instructions and correct pupils' behaviour.
- Similarly, when tasks are not pitched at the right level, pupils' behaviour deteriorates. Some teachers' tolerance of low-level disruptive behaviour is too high and, as a result, learning is impeded.
- Limited access to resources of sufficient quality results in some lessons failing to achieve the teachers' desired outcomes. In the early years class, the lack of suitable resources limits the opportunities children have to consolidate their learning by practising their developing skills through exploration and play.
- Teachers do not consistently make good use of the school's marking policy to ensure their feedback helps pupils to improve their work. This oversight further slows the progress pupils make.
- Teachers do not take steps to ensure that pupils present their work neatly at all times. Books often contain untidy handwriting and crossings out. Pupils frequently complete tasks from dull worksheets. As a result, pupils' books do not suggest that high value is placed on learning.
- Lessons proceed smoothly and swiftly when teachers explain tasks clearly. Teachers try hard to make lessons interesting and use available resources to motivate pupils.
- Teachers promote reading well, so pupils become confident readers. However, teachers are less effective at teaching writing. Teachers do not consistently challenge pupils to push themselves to produce work of high quality. Sometimes, when teaching mathematics, teachers expect too little intellectual effort from pupils. As a result, pupils spend time repeating work they can already do.
- The provision for physical education is effective. These lessons are energetic and enjoyable, and contribute towards pupils' good progress in developing physical skills and awareness.
- Teachers' planning shows that teachers are aware of their responsibility to promote pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. They take opportunities that arise in lessons to remind pupils about the importance of tolerance, understanding and respect for people's differences. In some lessons, particularly in Islamic studies, the school's values are effectively reinforced through the 'Hadeez of the Week'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. However, this section is judged to require improvement overall because pupils' behaviour is not always good enough.
- Pupils are confident and happy at the school. They attend regularly and on time. They say they feel safe, 'because everybody knows us well and makes sure we are well taken care of'. This perception is correct.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's premises are a safe place to be. They use scrupulous systems to ensure that pupils' safety is not compromised by the accessibility of the mosque to external users.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how aspects of their faith relate to wider values. Pupils are respectful of people of other cultures and faiths because they have been taught to understand and appreciate them. Pupils are beginning to make links between features of different religions, and they understand the reasons for different practices. Pupils express strongly that all views should be respected.
- Pupils are developing a sound basic knowledge of how British society works. For example, they know how Members of Parliament are elected and how laws are made. Pupils can talk about the place of laws in ensuring fairness and justice for all. Pupils are able to describe key features and personalities of the British Parliament and the Royal Family. Pupils have a good understanding of how democracy works and are proud of the recently elected school council, who told inspectors about their ambitious plans for the school.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and dealt with well, should it occur. They are aware of the difference between bullying and occasional fallings out between pupils.
- The school is helping pupils to develop a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe from a range of online risks. They know about the risks of cyberbullying and how to keep themselves safe from exposure to it. They are aware of the signs of grooming and its potential consequences. One pupil was able to give an inspector a detailed description of identity theft and how it can be used for fraudulent purposes.
- Leaders promote high aspirations for pupils' careers. Teachers seek and use opportunities to illustrate to boys and girls that they have freedom to choose their future paths and that nothing is beyond limits.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because sometimes pupils become distracted in lessons. When this happens, their attention wanders and their behaviour deteriorates. Some pupils then become chatty or fidgety and do not concentrate enough on their work. Others talk to one another when the teacher is talking or call out when they should be listening.
- Pupils are proud of their school and keep it looking tidy. They do not display the same degree of pride in their work. Their exercise books are often scruffy and uncared for, with untidy handwriting and messy pages.
- When pupils are moving around the school building and playing outside, their behaviour is considerate and well managed. Pupils open doors for adults and wait for them to pass by. Inspectors were greeted with cheery 'good mornings' from pupils and a group even came to say goodbye at the end of the inspection and thanked inspectors for visiting the school.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because the quality of teaching is not strong enough to enable all pupils to make good progress. Many pupils join the school with low levels of academic skills. As they do not make good progress from these starting points, their attainment by the end of Year 6 remains below that of pupils in most other schools.
- As leaders have not tracked the progress pupils make, it is not possible to determine the extent to which particular groups, such as disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs, perform differently from other pupils. However, pupils' books and observations of learning in classrooms suggest that there are no key groups who perform less well than others. Rather, it is a picture of inconsistent progress between subject and classes for all pupils.
- All pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. The school's focus on promoting speaking and listening skills from the early years through to Year 6 helps pupils to communicate confidently in English and provides them with a secure base from which to develop their writing skills. The teaching of writing does not build effectively from this foundation, however, so pupils' writing is not of good quality.

- Pupils acquire secure basic skills in mathematics. However, they do not demonstrate fluency in applying these skills to complex mathematical situations. Teachers give pupils some opportunities to solve mathematical problems, but the problems given do not deepen pupils' mathematical reasoning.
- From their earliest days at school, pupils are taught to use phonics (the sounds that letters make) to help them attempt new words. As they get older, pupils readily use this skill when tackling complicated texts. As a result, pupils become competent readers who are developing an interest in books.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because children do not make good progress in all areas of learning.
- In the past, assessment in the early years has not been used to identify whether or not children enter the school with skills that are typical for their age. This, in turn, has prevented adults from demonstrating whether the skills children develop over the course of the Reception Year represent good progress.
- Senior leaders do not include early years information in the school's assessment records. For example, no information is available to show which children reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year in July 2015. A system for tracking children's progress has recently been introduced.
- Children currently in the Reception class are making better progress in some areas of learning than in others. Through working directly with the class teacher, children acquire basic reading, writing and mathematics skills and learn to use some creative techniques. However, insufficient resources are available to enable children to practise and apply these skills in less formal situations in order to build deeper understanding.
- Adults make good use of most opportunities to help children to learn to speak English effectively. This helps them to grow in confidence. However, some adults do not correctly pronounce the sounds that letters make when helping children to develop their early reading and writing skills. As a result, children's understanding is impaired and this leads to errors in their spelling skills. For example, by mispronouncing words such as 'vet', staff inadvertently lead children into writing 'vat' by mistake.
- Children settle quickly in to the Reception class. They enjoy learning and talk confidently with adults. Some children find it difficult to share equipment with others and fall out easily with their classmates. Most soon learn to listen to the teacher and follow instructions quickly. A few do not. Some take too long to line up when told to and are noisy when they do so. Adults sometimes overlook these situations, so do not reinforce the social skills children need to become successful learners.
- Improvements to the facilities for the early years are well under way. A lower ground floor of the school is currently undergoing refurbishment to make it suitable for children aged from two to five years. The scale and quality of the renovation appear likely to result in suitable accommodation for this purpose.

School details

Unique reference number	134422
Inspection number	10007529
DfE registration number	336/6024

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Muslim
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Rashid Ahmed Raja
Chair	Ahmed Hans
Headteacher	Mr Rashid Ahmed Raja
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,200
Telephone number	01902 710473
Website	None
Email address	ipswolverhampton@hotmail.co.uk
Date of previous school inspection	18–21 June 2012

Information about this school

- Islamic Preparatory School is an Islamic day school for boys and girls. The school operates as part of the Wolverhampton Mosque Trust. It occupies the upper floor of Wolverhampton Central Mosque and an adjacent converted residential building.
- Pupils on the school's roll are currently aged 3–11. Until October 2014, the school catered for both primary- and secondary-aged pupils. Governors took the decision in 2014 to cease secondary provision in order to focus on providing quality education for the early years and primary phases of education. The school is working with the local authority for Wolverhampton to secure maintained provision for children from two years of age.
- Pupils receive some of their physical education at the training ground for Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club. These sessions are delivered by staff from the football club.
- Pupils travel to the school from a wide geographical area as well as locally. Most pupils are transported to and from school in school minibuses.
- Many families are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritages. Others are from the Indian sub-continent, Somalia and Saudi Arabia. The school provides education for an increasing number of newly arrived pupils whose families are seeking refuge from their country of origin, including from Syria.
- The school was last inspected in June 2012. That inspection was carried out by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) which judged the school to be broadly satisfactory. The BSI is no longer an approved inspectorate. The Department for Education (DfE) now commissions Ofsted to carry out inspections of all non-association independent schools on its behalf.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning by visiting lessons in all classes, talking to pupils about their work and scrutinising the work in their books.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss: the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness; plans for improvement; evidence of pupils' outcomes; the school's curriculum, including provision for Islamic studies; and arrangements for safeguarding.
- Checks were made to ascertain the school's compliance with the independent school standards. Inspectors examined policy documents, checked the school's premises and spoke to pupils.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) to allow inspectors to take them into account. However, additional comments made by those parents who completed the survey were considered.
- A range of documents was examined, including: leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness; curriculum policies and schemes of work; the school's assessment information; leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and plans for improvement. Records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sandra Hayes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mitchell Moore

Her Majesty's Inspector

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