

# Al-Ashraf Primary School

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

## Inspection dates

14–16 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The trust and governors have not ensured that the independent school standards are met in full. Leaders have an over-generous view of the school's effectiveness.
- The trust has not ensured that there are sufficient leadership roles in place. As a result, leaders have not been able to maintain the quality of education seen previously.
- The leadership of safeguarding is inadequate. Systems to investigate, record and monitor concerns lack rigour.
- The trust does not ensure that health and safety checks are completed and does not rigorously analyse pupils' attendance.
- The trust has not ensured that there is good leadership of the Reception class. The quality of teaching for these children is inadequate.
- Work is not consistently matched well to pupils' needs, including in Islamic studies. Some of the most able pupils and pupils with low starting points do not make the progress they should.
- The trust has not ensured that staff have the resources and the effective professional development to help them to improve the quality of their work. As a result, the quality of teaching is too inconsistent.
- Assessment is underdeveloped at the school. Leaders do not check the accuracy of the assessments made.

### The school has the following strengths

- The curriculum is broad. Pupils have a strong understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- Pupils behave well for most lessons. They are polite and respectful to staff and to each other. This is not as strong during the Islamic lessons.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school and the education it provides.
- The nursery provides children with a strong start to their education. Teaching is of high quality and children make rapid progress.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership, management and governance of the school by ensuring that:
  - there is a strong culture of safeguarding and that practices and procedures are well understood
  - there is an urgent review of the leadership structure so that there is sufficient leadership capacity at the school to make the improvements needed
  - all health and safety checks are completed
  - the quality of teaching resources available for staff, particularly to use with the youngest children in the Reception class, improves
  - high-quality practice that exists within the school, for example in the nursery, is shared across the school
  - governors and leaders draw on the support they need to accurately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of the school
  - leaders develop the systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the progress pupils make, ensuring that assessment information is accurate and reliable.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - a programme of training is put in place so that staff receive appropriate guidance and support
  - teachers plan learning to meet pupils' needs, particularly in the Islamic education sessions and in the Reception class
  - assessment is used effectively to adapt teaching to address any misconceptions or deepen pupils' understanding.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
  - providing more challenging work for the most able pupils to enable them to attain higher standards
  - ensuring that lower-ability pupils make at least good progress from their starting points
  - building on the strong start seen in the nursery, so that pupils make at least good progress across the school from their starting points in Reception class.
- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders and managers are not doing enough to tackle weaknesses in safeguarding and to ensure all independent school standards are met. The governing body recognises that there needs to be an effective system for evaluating how well the school meets the independent school standards. Although this work has started, there is a lack of rigour. Several standards are not met.
- The trust has not ensured that there is a leadership structure which is able to provide an effective overview of the running of the school. Too much responsibility sits with too few members of staff and as a result, there are weaknesses in the quality of education and safety for pupils. There are no subject leaders and there is no suitably qualified special educational needs (SEN) coordinator.
- The culture of safeguarding is not strong across the school. The school's website includes a safeguarding policy, which meets requirements and takes into account recent government guidance. However, some safeguarding training has not been completed and the system for reporting concerns lacks rigour.
- Governors do not ensure that there is careful checking to make sure that the school's premises are clean and well-maintained for staff and pupils' use.
- Support provided by leaders and managers is limited and teachers and teaching assistants are not receiving the guidance they need. This is particularly the case for teachers who are new to the teaching profession. Recently, leaders have recognised the need to provide staff with high-quality support as part of their professional development to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders have not made sure that good practice that exists within the school, for example the strong practice seen in the nursery, has been shared across the school. There are few examples of leaders seeking support from outside the school. The school does not work with others, for example to ensure that the assessments that teachers make are accurate.
- Teachers have not been held to account sufficiently for the progress of pupils. Leaders have introduced a new assessment system to better track pupils' progress but until recently have not been able to demonstrate the progress these different groups of pupils are making. As a result, the progress of some pupils, including the most able and pupils who have lower starting points, requires improvement.
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum and pupils' personal development is developed well. Extra-curricular clubs are offered to pupils, which contributes to their strong personal development. However, monitoring of how effectively the schemes of work for individual subjects are implemented is inconsistent.

## Governance

- Current arrangements to provide leadership for the school are inadequate.
- The trust's lack of robust challenge and scrutiny means that the school has declined since the previous inspection. Independent school standards have not been met and therefore the school no longer provides a good standard of education for pupils.
- The trust and governing body are committed to providing a high-quality education that includes an Islamic faith element. Many governors give generously of their time to the school: 'It's not our job, it's our life' represents the views expressed.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The trust has not acted to ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are secure. Leaders do not rigorously and appropriately investigate all concerns when they arise. Record keeping and monitoring systems are not robust.
- Despite the trust's lack of overview of safeguarding, staff have received appropriate training on a range of safeguarding issues, which enables them to identify possible signs of harm. This includes the latest guidance on how to identify pupils at risk from radicalisation or child sexual exploitation.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that risk assessments include sufficient detail so that risks for pupils are identified appropriately. Staff are not sufficiently aware about how to identify hazards in the environment.
- The nursery currently operates separate systems for safeguarding and these were found to be effective.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Staff have not had sufficient guidance to support their knowledge of changes to the curriculum and assessment. Despite some strengths in the quality of teaching and learning, too often, work does not take account of what pupils know, understand and can do. The trust has not ensured that newly qualified teachers, in particular, receive the support to develop their practice.
- Too often, teachers' questioning does not sufficiently challenge pupils to think and work out problems for themselves. For example, in science pupils do not rapidly develop their knowledge of enquiry and investigative skills.
- The lack of professional development extends to support given to teaching assistants to develop their practice. Teaching assistants provide individual support, which helps some pupils to develop their personal and emotional skills and achieve well. However, in lessons, pupils sometimes have too much support, which prevents them from developing the skills they need to learn for themselves.
- The recently introduced assessment system is starting to support teachers in planning to ensure that work meets pupils' next steps. However, the system is too recent to see an improvement in pupils' outcomes, particularly for the most able pupils and for pupils who

have additional learning needs.

- Different teachers come into school to teach the part of the day given to Islamic education. Expectations are not consistently high for these lessons. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged and some lose interest and show poor behaviour. Governors have recognised this and strategies are now being put in place to improve these lessons. This work is very recent and has not yet made a significant difference to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Where expectations are high and teachers have strong subject knowledge, pupils enjoy their learning and apply themselves well to their work. For example, pupils were enthusiastic about the books they were reading, they showed good understanding of the text and were able to predict what would happen next, using information they had understood.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. The trust's lack of strong leadership of the promotion of safety and welfare for pupils means that they cannot be sure of pupils' well-being and that their social and emotional needs are consistently met. This inconsistency results in the lack of pride and care that pupils occasionally demonstrate in the presentation of their work.
- The personal, social and health education curriculum actively promotes pupils' personal development and their understanding of British values. For example, pupils learn the significance of the poppy and Remembrance Day.
- Pupils learn about a wide range of views, cultures and beliefs. The curriculum provides opportunities for understanding of other faiths, for example the significance of Yom Kippur in Judaism and Christmas in Christianity.
- Pupils are supported well in understanding their own emotions and how to stay safe from bullying, especially cyber bullying. As one pupil said, 'school is our second home, like a family'.
- Pupils have a clear awareness of democracy and can demonstrate their experience of democratic values being promoted in their school, for example in school council elections and their canvassing of governors for support following fundraising.
- Staff do not tolerate any sort of prejudice. Pupils are encouraged to think about their feelings and to consider the feelings of others. There is a strong sense of right and wrong and a healthy respect and tolerance for a range of views, beliefs and religions.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although pupils are confident and generally have positive attitudes towards their learning, this is not consistent. Pupils occasionally show a lack of pride and interest in their work.
- Pupils conduct themselves well and show self-discipline during the majority of the school day. However, when moving from one part of the day to another, behaviour can become

less consistent.

- Although attendance is around the national average, and day by day it is carefully checked, governors do not analyse attendance levels or look at patterns of attendance. Therefore leaders are not driving improvements in attendance by ensuring focused support is provided for those pupils who are regularly absent.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Requires improvement**

- Pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make good progress. Pupils' books and observations of learning show that older pupils are expected to think more deeply to solve problems and to apply the skills they have learned to write in depth. However, this is inconsistent across the school and as a result, too many pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The trust has not ensured that there is a suitably qualified SEN coordinator in place. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with lower starting points do not consistently receive the individual support to help them to make good progress and achieve well. Although individual plans are in place, these are not carefully checked to ensure that learning targets are appropriate and that they are being achieved over time.
- The standards that pupils reach in developing their knowledge and understanding of phonics are consistently low and pupils' books show that spelling is weak across the school. Many pupils speak English as an additional language, increasing their need for high-quality teaching of phonics and vocabulary. Older pupils make rapid and accelerated progress due to the better provision and high expectations set for these pupils.
- Despite the lack of subject leadership that exists within the school, pupils, particularly in key stage 2, enjoy reading for pleasure. Older pupils develop their understanding and are able to draw inferences and justify these with reference to the text. As with other subjects, there is some inconsistency in the approaches across the school. Some pupils wish for a wider range of books to be available to them.
- Despite the weaknesses that exist in the trust's leadership of the school, many pupils leave the school with outcomes that are at expected or above expected standards. This is due to the stronger quality of teaching for older pupils.

### **Early years provision**

### **Inadequate**

- The trust has not ensured that there is good leadership across the early years classes. In the Reception class, there is a lack of understanding of the welfare requirements for early years. Staff do not reliably check that the environment is free of hazards. Learning resources are of poor quality. This is particularly the case for learning outside, where children have very few resources that interest them.
- Standards for children in Reception are weaker for physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. The most able children are not making sufficient progress to reach a greater depth of understanding across a range of learning areas.
- The trust has not ensured that staff in Reception receive high-quality guidance to help

them to provide good quality teaching and learning. The understanding of child development and how to provide suitable learning activities is weak.

- Children in Reception have too few opportunities to explore and learn for themselves both inside and outside. As a result, children are often restless and uninterested. Staff do not make the best use of learning time and therefore do not make the progress they could.
- This is in sharp contrast to the education provided in the nursery. Children here are supported very well during their initial introduction to school. Nursery staff have a sound understanding of the needs and interests of children. Extensive professional development ensures that staff have solid understanding of developments in early years education, which they then apply to good effect within the setting.
- Staff in the nursery are held robustly to account for the progress of children. The culture of safeguarding is strong. Parents are delighted with the care and attention their children receive in the nursery.
- Governors provide challenge as well as support for leaders to ensure that the nursery continues to improve and develop. Governors are aware that the next important step is to ensure that this successful practice is shared widely across the rest of the school.

## School details

Unique reference number	135097
DfE registration number	916/6081
Inspection number	10033892

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	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	180
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al-Madani Educational Trust
Chair	Yakub Patel
Headteacher	Abdullah Patel
Annual fees (day pupils)	£875–£1,255
Telephone number	01452 503 533
Website	<a href="http://primary.al-ashraf.org.uk">primary.al-ashraf.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@al-ashraf.gloucs.sch.uk">info@al-ashraf.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–19 June 2014

## Information about this school

- Al-Ashraf Primary School is an independent Muslim day school for boys and girls aged from four to 11 years. It opened in 2006. The number of pupils has risen since the previous inspection. The school is registered for 180 pupils. Currently there are 180 boys and girls on roll. There is also a nursery base within the school.
- The school is operated by the Al-Madani Education Trust, a registered charity that provides educational help and local support in Gloucestershire. The trustees have delegated governance of the school to the governing body, which is chaired by one of the trustees. The headteacher is responsible for both the primary school and the nearby Al-



Ashraf Secondary School for Girls. A deputy headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for the primary school.

- The school is located in the Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, a three-storey building close to the centre of Gloucester. Most pupils are from Indian or Pakistani backgrounds, with smaller numbers from a range of different backgrounds.
- The school aims to deliver education in stimulating and challenging ways, and to create tolerant individuals who respect and appreciate others, their cultural background, feelings and views from an Islamic perspective. The school follows the early years foundation stage requirements for younger children and the English national curriculum for key stages 1 and 2, supplemented by daily Islamic education sessions.
- There are no pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan.
- The previous standard inspection was in June 2014. An emergency inspection was carried out in January 2015 when a number of standards were not met. At a progress monitoring inspection in November 2015, all standards were found to be met. All inspections have been carried out by Ofsted. The nursery was previously inspected separately. It received an outstanding judgement at the previous inspection in January 2015. Due to changes in registration arrangements, the nursery is now included as part of the primary school inspections.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, including the nursery, and looked at pupils' work from subjects across the curriculum. Senior leaders joined the inspectors during these learning walks.
- Meetings were held with the deputy headteacher (who is also the designated safeguarding lead), the nursery manager and eight governors (of whom four are also members of the proprietor's board of trustees). Inspectors spoke with staff throughout the inspection. An inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority regarding safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including information on pupils' attainment and progress. The school's plans for improvement, minutes of governors' meetings, behaviour logs and attendance registers were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at examples of reports to parents and records relating to safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors took a tour of the premises.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during social times and one inspector also met with a group of pupils for a longer discussion.
- The views of the 44 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and comments made by parents, were taken into account. Inspectors also took into account the views of 23 members of staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Mirams

Ofsted Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school must meet the following independent school standards**

Ensure that teaching is effective:

Ensure pupils acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop new skills in the subject taught.

Ensure that classroom resources are of a good quality, quantity and range.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(f)

Ensure that the welfare, health and safety of pupils are promoted well:

The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

The proprietor must ensure that there is compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Paragraph 12

The proprietor must ensure that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a high standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. Paragraph 25

Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively, consistently meet the independent school standards, and actively promote the well-being of students. Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

For the Early Years Foundation Stage:

Ensure that the safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

Ensure that the learning and development requirements are met.

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