

# Al-Khair School

109–117 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 6BE

## Inspection dates

29–31 January 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders have not ensured that the statutory guidance on safer recruitment is followed. Leaders do not have a clear process to undertake due diligence on visitors to the school.
- There is confusion about who is responsible for holding leaders and staff to account.
- The early years provision is inadequate because not all the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years statutory framework are met.
- Leaders segregate pupils by sex without legal justification, which is in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and questioning skills.
- Pupils' outcomes are good. They are well prepared academically for the next stage of their education, from the early years to the end of the secondary school.
- Pupils are confident to put forward their point of view. They have strong speaking and debating skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They concentrate well in class, and are polite, kind and respectful to each other.
- There is a strong and varied enrichment programme to support pupils' personal development and welfare

### 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?

- Leaders must ensure that:
  - the school is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, by ceasing the unlawful segregation of pupils by sex
  - checks on staff from external agencies are completed in line with the statutory guidance and recorded clearly
  - applicants for a post at the school complete a full record of current and previous employment
  - references are taken in line with the statutory guidance
  - visiting speakers to the school are vetted to ensure that they are suitable, and the vetting is recorded clearly so that there is an audit trail of due diligence
  - lines of accountability are clear so that staff and other leaders know who is responsible for different tasks
  - all safeguarding and welfare requirements of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' are met.
- Improve pupils' personal development by ensuring that boys and girls have opportunities to learn and socialise together.
- 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

- Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school's safer recruitment practice and vetting of visitors to the school do not meet requirements. The segregation of pupils by sex for all classes and activities in the secondary part of the school without legal justification amounts to unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.
- The curriculum includes all the required areas of learning. In the primary section, there is a strong focus on English and mathematics. There is also a range of other subjects that are well planned and taught, including computing. In the secondary school, a high proportion of pupils study for the English Baccalaureate. This means they are prepared for further study in the next stage of their education. Leaders review and develop the curriculum regularly. For example, citizenship has been introduced and there are plans to start GCSE art in key stage 4.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a wide range of enrichment activities and make this a high priority so that it is included within the timetabled school day. Activities include golf, scuba diving, horse riding and archery. Pupils participate in public speaking and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. These activities have a positive impact on pupils' leadership skills.
- Middle leaders are fully committed to the pupils and the school. They take responsibility for developing their subject and ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching. They are enthusiastic about improving their subject and teaching knowledge to support others. Senior and middle leaders monitor teaching and learning effectively.
- The school's work to extend, improve and maintain the premises is effective. Leaders ensure that health and safety checks are completed and recorded. Risk assessments are detailed, useful and leaders review these regularly.
- Some aspects of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development are strong. Pupils are reflective learners. They learn about their own and other faiths. Pupils participate in a wide range of community projects. However, pupils' social development is limited by the school's segregation policy.
- Staff are fully supportive of the school leadership and proud to work at the school.

### Governance

- Those responsible for governance have not held school leaders to account effectively enough. As a result, the school does not meet all the independent school standards or the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 regarding the unlawful segregation of pupils by sex.
- Lines of accountability and governance are unclear, causing confusion and lack of clarity as to leaders' responsibilities. The school showed inspectors two different versions of the school organisational structure. External challenge to leaders is limited because the proprietor takes on the governance role, and the executive headteachers act in part as an external reviewer. The proprietor sometimes draws on the expertise of the trustees and departments within the foundation, such as human resources.

- The proprietor has a clear vision for the school to combine a strong academic curriculum for pupils and a depth of understanding of their Islamic faith. Sometimes, school leaders come under pressure from the community about a range of issues, such as a desire to increase the memorisation of the Koran or to prevent girls from going scuba diving. The proprietor and leaders can explain clearly and honestly how they address parents' concerns without changing their vision for the school. The proprietor describes this as 'balance without compromise'.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's safer recruitment practice is consistently in line with the statutory guidance. Leaders have not made sure that applicants for posts at the school complete application forms correctly so that all employment is accounted for. Referees are not always named from the candidate's current or most recent employment. Even when they are, references are not always taken from managers at these employments.
- Systems and procedures for vetting visitors to the school are either not carried out or not recorded systematically. As a result, leaders cannot evidence due diligence.
- Leaders have not ensured that the process to recruit staff from agencies is robust. Errors are not picked up because paperwork is not scrutinised rigorously. The overall picture of checks on agency staff is confusing and does not meet the independent school standards for agency staff or the single central record (SCR). Lines of accountability are weak. Although various leaders and staff check the SCR, it is not clear who is ultimately responsible.
- Other aspects of the school's safeguarding practice are stronger. Pupils are well cared for. The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are trained and can explain how they follow up and act when there are concerns. Pupils know who the DSLs are and what their role is. They know who to go to if they are worried. Staff are trained in the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders can identify local risks, and the strength of the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision underpins this work. Pupils who spoke to inspectors explained that they know how to keep themselves safe online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teaching is strong across the different phases, from Reception to the end of key stage 4. Teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Pupils enjoy learning.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They plan and sequence work effectively so that pupils can build and develop their understanding. For example, in mathematics, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of increasingly complex algebraic expressions by plotting a set of values and comparing graphs.
- Teachers set work which is generally challenging for pupils and helps them to learn. However, there is some variation in the secondary year groups, where the level of challenge does not consistently meet pupils' learning needs.

- Teachers have strong questioning skills. They ask a wide range of different types of questions to check pupils' understanding and encourage them to think deeply about what they are learning. Teachers' questioning gives pupils opportunities to develop their speaking skills, to debate issues and to explore different points of view.
- Teachers and teaching assistants monitor pupils' work closely and provide support to challenge pupils and correct any misconceptions. Pupils are confident to ask teachers questions and say that teachers will always help them to improve their learning.

## 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 school's otherwise strong work in this area is impaired by the unlawful segregation by sex. Pupils are denied opportunities to learn alongside the opposite sex, as girls and boys are taught in separate classes.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. The strong relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils, create a positive learning environment in the school.
- Pupils say that there is very little, if any, bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. Pupils say that teachers are approachable and will always sort out any difficulties.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about equality and diversity. They know about the protected characteristics and can articulate their beliefs in the importance of respect and British values. The strengths in teaching, which enable pupils to develop ideas and debate different viewpoints, also have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils develop empathy for others.
- The school's enrichment programme, and its focus on developing pupils' leadership skills, supports pupils' personal development well. For example, during the inspection, the primary school council visited a local Church of England primary school for a joint meeting.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are conscientious and lap up learning with enthusiasm. There is almost no disruption in lessons because teachers plan lessons well to interest and involve pupils.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils conduct themselves in a polite and respectful manner around the premises. Pupils understand the behaviour policy, sanctions and rewards. Leaders' close monitoring of behaviour and swift and proportionate response to any incident ensure that staff manage behaviour well.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly in the current academic year. Although pupils' attendance still varies between year groups, overall it is just above the national

figures for both primary and secondary schools.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes for pupils are good. In 2018, at the end of key stage 4, pupils attained significantly higher than other pupils nationally in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils make good progress and achieve positive outcomes. In 2018, boys attained slightly less well than girls. However, in the current cohorts, boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are strong.
- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Thorough work by leaders to support pupils with learning needs is developing well. Staff are motivated to support this group of pupils and put their training into practice. This work is in the early stages of development, but already has an impact on pupils' engagement and progress.
- In the primary school, teachers design activities and work that meet the needs of pupils from different starting points. In the secondary school, teachers' adapting of work to meet pupils' needs is not as well developed.
- Pupils are well prepared academically for the next stage of their education at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4. This is because of consistently strong teaching across the school. At the end of key stage 4, pupils' attainment and their positive attitudes to learning enable them to move into school sixth forms of their choice.

## Early years provision

**Inadequate**

- The early years provision is inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that the safer recruitment procedures, which make sure that staff are suitable to work with children, are followed. As a result, the school does not comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.
- Children experience all areas of learning. The outdoor area has been developed, but there is still more to do to maximise its potential for outdoor learning, as well as play. Leaders have identified that children would benefit from greater focus on developing their creativity, and this is under way. Pupils' personal development is strong.
- Assessment activities are well matched to children's needs so that they make good progress. Staff are skilled and use assessment well to determine a child's next steps. They plan suitable activities which capture children's interest and imagination.
- Leaders have developed strong links with parents and carers. Parents are kept up to date about activities and events in early years through regular newsletters and emails. Parents contribute to their child's reading log, and are invited into school for activities, workshops and social events.
- Children play well and are kind to each other. They are confident and behave well because adults make sure routines are clear to them. Adults constantly interact with

children, ask questions and talk to them to develop their learning and communication.

- Pupils develop their phonics knowledge well and apply it to their reading and writing. Staff monitor pupils' reading carefully. Teachers use a range of reading schemes and other texts to ensure the children's progression. Pupils make strong progress in writing. The most able children write in full sentences. Pupils are well prepared for Year 1.

## School details

Unique reference number	134585
DfE registration number	306/6096
Inspection number	10054292

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	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	393
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Qasim Rashid Ahmed
Headteacher	Syed Ali
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,200 secondary £4,720 primary
Telephone number	020 8662 8664
Website	<a href="http://www.alkhairschool.org.uk">www.alkhairschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:secondary@alkhairschool.org.uk">secondary@alkhairschool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	29 September – 1 October 2015

## Information about this school

- Al-Khair School is an independent day school for boys and girls in the London Borough of Croydon. The school has a Muslim ethos.
- The school was established in 2003 and is registered for up to 465 pupils between the ages of four and 16. There are currently 393 pupils on roll.
- The school is located on two sites. The secondary school is in converted commercial and residential buildings on Cherry Tree Road. The primary school is located about a mile away on Pitlake Road in commercial premises, which have been adapted for educational use. Pupils use a wide range of local leisure facilities for physical education and enrichment.

- The school operates a policy of segregation by sex in the secondary school from age 11 to 16. The boys' department is located on the ground floor of the building, and the girls' department is on the first floor. Boys and girls have separate entrances to the school. Pupils are segregated for classes and all other activities. The policy causes the following detriment to pupils: boys and girls cannot learn and socialise together. Given this detriment, the policy constitutes direct discrimination, contrary to the Equality Act 2010.
- Leaders intend to de-amalgamate the departments into separate schools. They intend to do this by summer 2019. At the time of the inspection, leaders had not yet started the formal process of de-amalgamation. However, leaders had consulted with parents and drawn up separate policies for the proposed girls' school. Leaders made an application for a material change to the Department for Education (DfE) during the inspection.
- The school is associated with the Al-Khair Foundation, a registered charity. The school does not have a governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes in leadership. There are two executive headteachers. They are the previous headteachers of the secondary and primary departments. The secondary headteacher has been in post for two years. A new primary headteacher took up post in September 2018 but has since resigned. The executive headteacher, formerly the primary headteacher, has temporarily taken over this role.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes on both school sites, in all year groups, including the early years provision. Some of these visits were made jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the executive headteachers, subject leaders and other staff.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor.
- The lead inspector gathered evidence from representatives of Croydon local authority: the 'Prevent' officer and the head of learning access.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents from the 27 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View).
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses to the Ofsted staff survey, and talked informally with staff.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in classes and at breaktime, and met with three groups of pupils, including the school councils and prefects. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including records relating to safeguarding, health and safety, the curriculum, teaching, and pupils' attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted Inspector

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

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

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school—
  - 3(j) does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the 2010 Act.

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

#### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 19(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
  - 19(2)(a)(i)(cc) if the employment business has obtained such a certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school, whether it disclosed any matter or information; and
  - 19(2)(c) before a person offered for supply by an employment business begins work at the school the person's identity is checked by the proprietor of the school (irrespective of any such check carried out by the employment business before the person was offered for supply);
- 21(5) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to supply staff—
  - 21(5)(a)(i) checks corresponding to those referred to in sub-paragraph (3)(a)(i) to (iv), (vi) and (vii) have been made to the extent relevant to any such person.

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

### **The school must meet the following statutory requirements of the early years**

## **foundation stage**

Providers must have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Working together to safeguard children 2015' and to the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2015'. All schools are required to have regard to the government's 'Keeping children safe in education' statutory guidance, and other childcare providers may also find it helpful to refer to this guidance. If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay. This means the local children's social care services and, in emergencies, the police (3.7).

Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. Providers must have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners, and any other person who is likely to have regular contact with children (including those living or working on the premises), are suitable (3.9).

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