

Al-Ashraf Primary School

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

Inspection dates

13 June 2019

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a)

- Since the previous monitoring inspection in December 2018, leaders have brought about the necessary improvements to pupils' progress. Leaders have increased their understanding about where strengths and weaknesses exist in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils' workbooks now show where leaders' and teachers' efforts are paying off. As a result, pupils' rates of progress have increased.
- Pupils' writing books now demonstrate improved progress. They show that pupils write frequently and with increasing spelling accuracy, beginning in the Reception class. Pupils' books also show increasing care and precision in handwriting. There is evidence of more pupils working at the expectations for their age. There is an increased emphasis on writing across the school, demonstrating the focus that leaders are placing on it.
- Leaders recognise that although improved teaching of writing has led to better progress, there needs to be a more consistent approach across the school. Currently, teachers adopt different methods when teaching writing. This can make it difficult for leaders to track progress and identify, with precision, how effective the teaching of writing is. In addition, leaders recognise that a whole school approach will help pupils as they progress from one class to the next, as they will already be familiar with teachers' expectations and approach to writing.
- Pupils now have some more opportunities to apply their knowledge of number to solve problems. Teachers have also focused on furthering pupils' understanding of number by revisiting known number facts. This enables pupils to revise areas of learning they have already covered. This approach is embedding well. However, on occasion, the mathematics curriculum jumps from one theme to another. This reduces pupils' opportunities to broaden their knowledge over a series of lessons. Nevertheless, pupils' workbooks show an increase in their progress in mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- Safeguarding continues to be effective. Leaders have ensured that recruitment arrangements meet requirements. They record information about employees accurately on the school's single central register.
- The interim headteacher, supported by her leadership team, ensures that safeguarding is the school's main priority. Leaders regularly question staff about their knowledge on how to keep children safe, including recognising signs of potential abuse. Leaders share updates about safeguarding, so staff have current information.
- Leaders take appropriate action when concerns about pupils' welfare arise. They record ongoing concerns in detailed chronologies, helping them to recognise any trends that may indicate wider concerns. Leaders engage well with external agencies, passing any concerns on in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Policies are up to date and compliant with the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State, 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2018. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34, 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- The newly formed leadership team, in place since the end of May 2019, are cohesive and committed to bringing about the necessary improvements. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have used this to inform their plans for securing future improvements.
- Leaders have acted to ensure that the unmet standards at the previous monitoring inspection are now met. However, leaders' plans for improvements are not limited to the unmet standards. They have identified areas of the school's performance that require further development and have allocated training and professional development time to address these.
- Leaders' plans for securing improvements away from the independent school standards, however, do not make clear how they will bring about improvements or when they would like improvements to be in place. This makes it difficult for them to track the progress of, or identify the impact of, their work.
- Leaders have an increasing understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Through monitoring, they have correctly identified where strengths and weaknesses lie. Subject leaders share this understanding. The roles of subject leaders, although relatively new, are vital to this ongoing improvement.
- Governors access key information about the school, including information about pupils' progress, attendance and safeguarding. This helps them to monitor how well leaders are fulfilling their roles. Governors acknowledge that there is a need to further strengthen systems and processes, particularly around monitoring and planning for future improvements.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

- Children in the early years are making improved progress. Activities promote children's early development, both in the Nursery and Reception class. Adults facilitate speaking and listening opportunities with children, often promoting ambitious vocabulary, particularly in mathematics. Teachers' assessments show that most children are working at the expectations for their age.
- Children's writing has improved since the previous monitoring inspection. Typically, children start the Reception Year with little understanding of phonics. Over time, children make increasingly accurate phonics choices when attempting to spell unfamiliar words, particularly with initial and final sounds. Children progress from writing single words to a series of sentences, including recounts based on their own experiences.
- Staff across the Nursery and Reception class are working more closely with one another. They share practice and information about children, so they can consider how best to meet their emerging needs. Children who need more support access interventions. Staff record targets for improvement on an intervention plan. Targets are precise and based on their ongoing assessments. However, intervention plans do not specify how children will meet the targets or when staff will review the impact on pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that baseline assessment information used to check what children know, can do and understand at the start of the year is accurate enough. There is some variation in the quality of the records of what children can do currently, compared to the assessments of their skills and abilities when they joined the Reception class. Leaders accept that they need to provide staff with better support to help measure children's attainment at the start of the year and use this to increase progress.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets 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(a) 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.

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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage-

- Learning and development requirements: paragraph 1.6.

School details

Unique reference number	135097
DfE registration number	916/6081
Inspection number	10101575

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al-Madani Educational Trust
Chair	Usman Tilly
Headteacher	Mrs Zainab Patel
Annual fees (day pupils)	£875–£1,225
Telephone number	01452 503 533
Website	www.primary.al-ashraf.org.uk
Email address	zpatel@al-ashraf.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	14–28 November 2017

Information about this school

- Al-Ashraf Primary School opened in 2006. It is an independent Muslim day school for boys and girls aged from two to 11 years.
- The Al-Madani Education Trust operate the school. The trustees have delegated governance of the school to the governing body.
- The interim headteacher has been in place since the end of May 2019. The trust has also recently appointed an education adviser to provide support to the senior leadership team for one day per week.
- The school is in the Al-Ashraf Cultural Centre, a three-storey building close to the centre

of Gloucester. Most pupils are from Indian, Bangladeshi or Pakistani backgrounds, with smaller numbers from a range of different backgrounds.

- The school aims to provide education based on the national curriculum and in keeping with Islamic morals and ethics. There are 144 pupils on roll, which includes children in the Nursery classes.
- Ofsted judged the school to be inadequate at the previous standard inspection in November 2017. A progress monitoring inspection took place in December 2018, which identified several unmet standards.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This inspection was conducted without notice.
- This was the second progress monitoring inspection. The previous progress monitoring inspection took place in December 2018. The Department for Education required the school to complete an action plan. This was accepted in March 2019.
- The inspector held meetings with the senior leadership team. The inspector also met with mathematics and English subject leaders, while scrutinising pupils' workbooks.
- The inspector scrutinised evidence of children's progress in the Reception class. He also scrutinised workbooks to consider how well pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make progress in writing and mathematics.
- The inspector met with the designated leader and deputy designated leader for safeguarding. The inspector considered how well staff record concerns about pupils' welfare and leaders pass these concerns on to the relevant external agencies.
- The inspector met with representatives from the local governing body, including the chair of governors. He also met with representatives of the proprietor.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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