

Al-Falah Primary School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Israr Khan

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Al-Falah Primary School opened in 2001 as a boys' primary school and moved to its current premises in Clapton, East London, in February 2004. It extended its provision in 2005 to admit girls as well as boys. Over the years the school has expanded from 30 on roll to its current roll of 103 pupils, aged from five to 11 years. It has been granted planning consent to admit a maximum of 120 pupils. The school provides an Islamic curriculum as well as most subjects of the National Curriculum. While all of the pupils in attendance are Muslims, the school's admissions policy is welcoming to pupils of all faiths and none. The school accepts pupils from a wide range of nationalities and cultures and while English is not the only language used at home it is fluently spoken. There are no pupils with learning difficulties or a statement of educational needs. The school aims to 'equip pupils to be morally responsible citizens who contribute positively to society'. This is the second inspection of the school; it was last inspected in October 2007.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of the education provided by Al-Falah Primary School is satisfactory and meets its aims. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall, leading to satisfactory progress by pupils. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Safeguarding procedures are secure and have been updated in line with current guidance. The school now meets all the statutory requirements for registration as an independent school; however, the quality of education since the last inspection has not improved significantly.

Quality of education

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. In the morning sessions a broad range of National Curriculum subjects is taught. Afternoon sessions see pupils study a range of Islamic disciplines. These courses aim to equip pupils with a deep knowledge of their faith. Personal, social and health education is also provided and incorporates citizenship.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

There are satisfactory policies for all subjects, and schemes of work support the teaching of National Curriculum subjects. However, work continues to be done to fully develop the latter. Appropriate programmes of work that support the teaching of the Islamic curriculum are also in place. The curriculum is well balanced so that pupils receive suitable amounts of subject time across the year groups. Consequently, staff are able to ensure that pupils build on their previous learning from year to year and make satisfactory progress overall during their time at the school.

The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) as a specific course is provided by the school and a number of new computers have been purchased recently. Nevertheless, the use of ICT is underdeveloped in other subjects in the curriculum. Pupils are set homework regularly and this is linked to the topics being taught.

A number of educational visits to help pupils in their learning are undertaken each year and there is also provision of a modest range of extra-curricular activities. The small playground restricts the type of outdoor sports the school can provide; consequently, use is made of a local park when required.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils, resulting in positive attitudes to learning. In the better lessons pupils make good progress through thorough preparation by teachers and a sharp focus on achieving the learning objectives identified. These lessons are characterised by good questioning that provides challenge to all and stretches the most-able pupils. In such lessons pupils make good progress in their learning as objectives and activities are tailored appropriately to meet the different abilities within the class. The needs of those with language difficulties are considered in the planning of lessons.

Most lessons observed were satisfactory. While teaching assistants provide good support to pupils in some lessons they are not always fully informed of what the teacher is trying to achieve with the pupils. In the few less than satisfactory lessons weaknesses exist in the way in which teachers impart knowledge, skills and understanding to the pupils and opportunities to involve the pupils in their own learning are often missed. In such lessons the needs of more-able pupils are not given enough consideration. Where the subject knowledge of the teachers is in need of development, for example for some in mathematics, they do not always explain what the pupils are required to do clearly enough and do not provide examples that are well structured. In such situations the assessments made of pupils are not always accurate.

The teaching of the Islamic curriculum is satisfactory. A significant amount of time is accorded to pupils memorising verses of the Qur'an and this is done well. But, not enough help is given to pupils to understand the meaning of what they are memorising.

Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The school has a sound framework in place to assess pupils' achievements. Teachers develop an understanding of pupils' abilities and use regular tests and formal assessments to monitor their progress. This understanding informs teachers' planning of lessons. The marking of pupils' written work is undertaken regularly. The assessment framework for the Islamic curriculum is good but implementation of some parts is not entirely consistent. A good, detailed homework diary that records pupils' progress in the Islamic curriculum is not always monitored sufficiently closely. Pupils' progress is tracked and targets are set.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is good. The Islamic ethos of the school promotes their spiritual and moral development well. Pupils report that they enjoy attending school and appreciate the close-knit school community of which they are a part. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils play and get on well with one another. Those from different cultural backgrounds mix well and play harmoniously together. Their behaviour around school is good, they have good attitudes to learning and they are able to distinguish right from wrong. Pupils accept responsibility for themselves and show consideration for others. Pupils' good behaviour and willingness to work together as a team contribute positively to their future lives.

Staff provide good role models and are shown a great deal of respect by the pupils. Pupils take an active role in fund raising to help others, such as victims of the Pakistan flood. The British Heart Foundation has also benefitted from fund raising undertaken by the school. Pupils are also provided opportunities to express their views and opinions and are encouraged to contribute to the life of the school through their elected school council representatives. The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. A range of visitors provides them with a satisfactory understanding of the local community and of public bodies and institutions. Pupils are taken on trips and visits which they enjoy. Opportunities are provided for pupils to share their knowledge and understanding of their cultures and learn about the customs of others around them. Visits to places of worship such as churches, a local synagogue and a Jewish school help them to learn about other faiths around them. This helps to promote harmony and tolerance between different cultural traditions.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Staff show care and concern for pupils in the day-to-day life of the school and pupils are well supervised. Staff build good relationships with pupils and this helps to ensure pupils' enjoyment of school. Bullying is rare and pupils feel secure at school and know how to keep safe. There is a clear behaviour policy that defines rewards and sanctions. Any difficulties are well attended to by staff, including care for the pupils when they are not well.

Appropriate policies, procedures and practices for child protection and safeguarding are in place and training is up to date, including training at a suitable level for designated senior staff. School records show that pupils have few accidents and that staff receive first-aid training.

A healthy eating policy reminds pupils of the importance and benefits of healthy eating. Opportunities to reinforce this message are also seized upon when they arise in lessons. The school has a policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school and risk assessments are undertaken. Emergency fire evacuation procedures are in place and fire safety equipment is monitored effectively.

The school's admission and attendance registers meet requirements. Plans to improve access to the building satisfy the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has completed the required range of checks during the staff appointment process and maintains a single central register of all the checks undertaken. There is a robust policy for staff recruitment, which is followed consistently. Appropriate checks have been carried out on the proprietorship.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The premises have been suitably converted for use as a school to provide safe and effective learning. In addition to the existing soft surface playground an adjacent strip of land has been annexed to provide the additional space needed. Break times for pupils are also staggered to ensure pupils' safety. On occasions pupils also make use of the local park for physical education lessons.

The premises are kept clean and tidy and the learning environment is enhanced through attractive displays of pupils' work. Flooring is in a satisfactory condition and there are adequate washroom facilities. The school has purchased some new computers and there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill.

Provision of information

A wide variety of useful, accurate and up-to-date information about the school is made available for interested parties. Additional information can also be requested from the school office. Annual reports are provided to parents and carers which detail pupils' attainment and attendance record. Those parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that they are very supportive of the school. The school has sent copies of its safeguarding policy to parents and carers and this is also made readily available to prospective parents and carers on request.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy is in full compliance with the regulations. The school reports that it has not received any complaints within the past year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Further develop the schemes of work.
- Make better use of teaching assistants.
- Ensure that pupils are taught the meaning of what they recite from the Qur'an.
- Ensure that assessments made of pupils' attainment are consistently accurate in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent
Type of school	Muslim Primary School
Date school opened	September 2001
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 60 Girls: 43 Total: 103
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,000
Address of school	48 Kenninghall Road Clapton London E5 8BY
Telephone number	020 8985 1059
Email address	alfalahschool@hotmail.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr M Abu Hussain
Proprietor	Mr M Zaki Ahmed