

Al-Falah Primary School

48 Kenninghall Road, Clapton, London E5 8BY

Inspection dates

30 October – 1 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' improvement plans are not focused on making sure that pupils make good progress, particularly in writing. This has undermined leaders' efforts to maintain the strengths in teaching and pupils' outcomes that were identified at the previous inspection.
- Governors have not checked closely whether leaders are taking effective steps to improve the quality of education.
- Too few pupils can write at the standard expected for their age. Teachers do not have high-quality information about pupils' writing outcomes to plan effectively for pupils' needs.
- Some teaching does not expect enough from pupils, particularly the most able. Pupils' progress is uneven because teaching does not routinely challenge them to aim high.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. Curriculum plans ensure that pupils are taught age-expected knowledge. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise and apply their learning. This prevents pupils from making strong progress across subjects.
- Staff want pupils to do well. However, leaders have not provided staff with enough guidance on how to develop their teaching skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders ensure that the requirements of the independent school standards are met.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders have rectified the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils work hard and want to be challenged.
- The school caters well for pupils' personal development. The curriculum instils pupils with strong moral values. Pupils are respectful and articulate. They are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes is typically stronger in reading, mathematics and Islamic studies than in other subjects.

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.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders devise, implement and evaluate improvement plans, which are centred on improving pupils' progress across a range of subjects, and particularly in writing.
- Governors and trustees hold leaders to account for how well pupils learn and make progress.
- Leaders review the design, implementation and impact of the curriculum to ensure that it supports pupils' good progress in subject-specific skills and knowledge.
- Staff, including subject leaders, benefit from a well-planned programme of professional development, which is linked to whole-school priorities.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - leaders and teachers have consistently high expectations for the quality, quantity and presentation of pupils' work, particularly in writing, and for the most able pupils
 - teaching provides pupils with regular opportunities to use and apply what they have learned
 - when planning learning, teachers consider how best to sequence activities to support pupils to acquire and deepen their knowledge and understanding
 - leaders and teachers have reliable information on pupils' progress, particularly in writing, and this information is used to plan teaching
 - teachers check that pupils use their knowledge of English grammar, punctuation and spelling to write at the standard expected for their age.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The quality of leadership requires improvement because leaders have not made sure that pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are capable of more, particularly in writing.
- Leaders are determined to provide pupils with a high-quality education. They make sure that the school complies with the regulations for independent schools. In general terms, leaders know which aspects of the school need further work. However, leaders' improvement planning is not focused enough. Leaders do not prioritise actions with sufficient rigour or evaluate if their work is making a difference to how well pupils learn.
- The curriculum satisfies the requirements of the independent school standards. Alongside English, mathematics and Islamic studies, pupils study interesting topics, such as the ancient Egyptians, Arabic and calligraphy. Pupils enjoy the variety of subjects on offer. However, leaders have not given careful thought to the knowledge and skills that they expect pupils to develop and retain in each subject. Pupils lack sufficient opportunities to revisit, and, in turn, secure a deeper understanding of important concepts. This contributes to pupils' variable progress over time.
- Subject leaders are skilled and knowledgeable. They are beginning to lead their areas of responsibility more effectively. However, they have not benefited from enough support and training to improve their leadership skills.
- Staff are committed, and morale is high. Staff appreciate how leaders motivate them to do their best for pupils. While leaders provide staff with regular feedback on how to improve their teaching skills, they do not routinely check whether teachers act on this. Similarly, leaders sometimes set teachers targets, but do not make available suitable guidance and training. For instance, leaders have told teachers that the proportion of pupils working at a higher standard needs to increase. However, leaders have not advised teachers on how they might do this.
- Pupils' attainment in tests is strong. This includes national assessments in reading and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2. However, leaders rely too much on this information to evaluate the quality of pupils' learning. Leaders have not kept a close eye on whether this attainment represents good progress from pupils' starting points. Information on pupils' progress is not reliable, particularly in writing. This hinders leaders from knowing precisely how to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes further.
- Leaders' work is bringing about the necessary improvements in the quality of pupil assessment information in reading, mathematics and science. Leaders use this information as a starting point for making changes to teaching and the curriculum. It is too early to judge whether this will lead to sustained improvements in pupils' progress.
- Leaders have created an inclusive and welcoming community. The school's religious ethos, underpinned by the values of kindness and tolerance, forms the basis for this. Staff are good role models in the way they speak to and care for pupils. Several pupils told inspectors that the 'school is like one giant family'. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the level of support and guidance that their children receive.
- Leaders, governors and staff are united in their aim for pupils to develop into responsible

and confident citizens. Through the well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils acquire the knowledge and attitudes they need to contribute successfully to the community and wider society.

- Pupils' understanding of British values is strong. As one pupil put it: 'We know that democracy and the rule of law mean that the country is safe and fair for everyone.' Leaders make effective use of extra-curricular activities to enhance pupils' understanding. For example, during a whole-school celebration of Black History Month, pupils told inspectors they had explored concepts of 'equality' and 'fairness', and had been reminded that 'it is always important to stand up to unkindness or cruelty'.
- The school's religious studies curriculum underpins pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are highly respectful and considerate of others. They understand that everyone is entitled to their own views, including those with different beliefs, backgrounds or lifestyles from their own. For example, they spoke knowledgeably and with maturity about their own faith and other religions, while recognising the right of individuals to be atheists, and the reasons for this.

Governance

- The trust's and management body's oversight of safeguarding arrangements is thorough. Their work has ensured that safeguarding arrangements comply with statutory requirements.
- Governors and trustees have a clear vision for the school, with equal weight given to pupils' academic and personal development, as well as to religious studies. They support leaders' efforts to improve pupils' outcomes in all aspects of their education. For instance, they have invested in high-quality reading books and a new library to encourage pupils to read widely and often.
- However, governors and trustees have not challenged leaders to develop and implement a well-targeted programme of school improvement. They have not helped leaders to understand or check whether the school is doing enough for pupils to reach high standards across the curriculum, and particularly in their writing.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders respond effectively to child protection concerns that arise. For instance, pupils at risk of going missing in education are identified promptly and leaders liaise closely with external agencies to make sure that pupils' welfare is not at risk. Leaders seek advice from external agencies to ensure that they understand local risks and adapt their safeguarding procedures accordingly.
- Leaders make sure that safeguarding arrangements incorporate the most recent statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State. For example, they have obtained additional emergency contact information for each pupil in response to the changes made to the statutory guidance in September 2018.
- Regular training means that leaders and staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their safeguarding duties. New staff receive a comprehensive induction programme covering all aspects of safeguarding, including health and safety. Staff are knowledgeable

about the signs or behaviours which can indicate that a pupil is vulnerable to harm. This includes understanding about the risks of peer-on-peer abuse, female genital mutilation and extremism. Leaders hold regular meetings with staff to refresh their knowledge and ensure that they remain vigilant.

- Leaders' approach to staff recruitment is rigorous. All staff undergo the required pre-employment checks. Records of these checks are well maintained.
- Leaders and governors continually assess the condition of the premises to ensure that it provides pupils with a safe and secure environment. Records show that leaders spot and deal with potential hazards promptly, so that the welfare of pupils, staff and visitors is maintained.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. One pupil, summing up the views of many, said: 'There is always an adult I can rely on to help me feel safe.' Parents agree that their children are safe and happy in school. The safeguarding policy is made available to parents on the school's website.
- In their work to improve safeguarding arrangements, leaders have not overlooked the importance of making sure pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Leaders involve external agencies in this work. For example, older pupils told inspectors how a recent police workshop helped them to learn about the dangers associated with gang-related activity and knife crime, and how they can avoid them. The comprehensive PSHE curriculum means that pupils develop the attitudes and knowledge they need to reject extreme or intolerant views, should they encounter them.

The school's progress towards meeting standards that were not met at the previous inspection

- At the previous full standard inspection and subsequent progress monitoring visit, inspectors found that leaders did not maintain accurate records of child protection concerns and whether these had been followed up appropriately. Leaders had not done enough to establish a culture of safeguarding. Consequently, the standards in Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 7(a) were not met. The standards in Part 8, related to leadership and management, were also unmet.
- As reported above, leaders have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Records of child protection concerns are appropriately detailed, with a clear chronology of the issues raised and the actions that leaders have taken in response.
- The proprietor has made sure that leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep pupils safe.
- The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards: *Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 7(a) and Part 8, paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c).*

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable and requires improvement.
- Across the curriculum, leaders and staff have not established sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can do. This is particularly the case in writing. The teaching of

reading and mathematics is typically of better quality than for writing.

- Teaching is usually based on age-appropriate knowledge and skills. Sometimes, however, teachers do not sequence activities in a way that allows pupils to acquire a deep enough understanding of what they have been taught. Pupils learn new content or knowledge in isolation, without putting into practice what they have been taught.
- Teachers do not use pupil assessment information as well as they could to set pupils suitably challenging work. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. Although teachers usually provide pupils with extension tasks, they do not give enough thought to how these tasks will stretch pupils' thinking. While the tasks are interesting and keep pupils busy, they are sometimes no more demanding than the work that pupils have already completed successfully.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their writing skills are limited. Teachers do not make sure that pupils use their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling when writing independently, both in English and in other subjects. Sometimes, teachers readily praise pupils' writing, even when the quality or quantity of the work does not reflect pupils' abilities.
- Teachers do not assess pupils' writing accurately. This prevents teachers from knowing what they should teach to enable pupils to write at the age-expected standard.
- Mathematics teaching provides pupils with a secure foundation in mental and written calculation methods, as well as making sure that pupils understand concepts such as shape and measure. Nevertheless, pupils lack opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve complex problems or reason mathematically. To address this, leaders have reviewed the school's approach to mathematics teaching. There are signs of improvement in some year groups, but this work is not fully embedded.
- Science teaching gives due weight to subject-specific knowledge, such as how the human body works. However, pupils do not routinely carry out practical tasks and investigations to further their understanding.
- Classrooms are well resourced and are nurturing learning environments. Teachers foster pupils' confidence in their own skills and abilities. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, who are ready to ask questions and learn from their mistakes. However, sometimes teachers do not expect pupils to present their work as neatly as they could. For example, in mathematics, teachers do not make sure pupils that draw shapes with a ruler, or organise their calculations in a way that supports their mathematical thinking.
- In some classrooms and subjects, teachers are quick to identify and correct pupils' misconceptions so they do not fall behind in their learning. The teaching of Islamic studies is particularly strong. Here, teachers know precisely what they want pupils to learn and check pupils' progress carefully. Pupils are motivated and keen to meet their teachers' high expectations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's harmonious atmosphere instils pupils with a strong sense of belonging. Pupils

spoke with pride about how everyone gets along well and takes good care of each other.

- Pupils who join the school mid-way through an academic year receive the support they need to settle in quickly, make friends and feel included. Parents were complimentary about this aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils relish the opportunities the school provides for them to take on responsibility and contribute positively to the wider community. For example, pupils were keen to talk to inspectors about how they had recently been involved in a campaign to clean up litter in the local area.
- Bullying is unusual. Pupils know about the different forms of bullying, and how to report any concerns they might have. They are confident that bullying or unkindness is not tolerated by staff or their peers.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a comprehensive knowledge of potential risks to their safety. For example, older pupils spoke about the need to be cautious when using social media or playing online games because 'the internet makes it harder to check a person's real identity'.
- In the playground, staff supervise pupils appropriately. Pupils say that there are very few problems, but an adult is always on hand to resolve any disagreements.
- The outside space is well maintained and secure. While it is not unsafe, leaders' organisation of the space at breaktimes does not support pupils' physical activity as well as it could. Pupils try their best to play games in a manner that is considerate of others. However, they told inspectors that 'we sometimes get in each other's way' or 'bump into each other by accident'. School records confirm this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to make the most of their education, as their above-average attendance shows. Leaders and staff identify and follow up any attendance issues. Very few pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They are considerate of each other and adults in classrooms, and when moving around corridors.
- Pupils require few reminders from adults to maintain their good standards of behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour are uncommon. Pupils feel the behaviour system is fair and encourages them to conduct themselves in a kind and sensible manner.
- Relationships in classrooms are based on mutual respect. Pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to their peers. On occasions, when teaching is not demanding enough, pupils become restless or lose interest. Nevertheless, pupils' behaviour is rarely disruptive.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress varies across subjects. This is because of the variable quality of teaching and curriculum planning, which prevents pupils from remembering and applying important skills and knowledge.
- Pupils attain well in reading and mathematics tests, including the national assessments at

the end of Year 2 and Year 6. While pupils do well in tests, work in their books indicates that they are unable to sustain these high standards outside of a test environment.

- The quality of pupils' writing is sometimes weak. Pupils attain high standards in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test at the end of key stage 2. However, pupils' written work contains many basic errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length, or independently.
- Many pupils struggle to write neatly because they do not have a secure knowledge of how to form and join letters correctly. This was an area for improvement at the previous inspection.
- Work in pupils' books shows that most-able pupils could do more. The progress of these pupils is hindered because they are sometimes given work that is too easy. Inspectors agree with the pupils who said they were ready for more challenging work.
- School information indicates that almost all Year 1 pupils attain the expected standard in the phonics screening check. When reading to inspectors, younger pupils drew effectively on their phonics knowledge to read accurately and confidently. Until recently, however, leaders did not make sure that Year 1 pupils read regularly at home to strengthen their phonics skills.
- Key stage 2 pupils are enthusiastic and regular readers. Teachers encourage pupils to try different authors and genres. Leaders make sure that pupils have access to high-quality fiction books, both in classrooms and in the new library. Pupils told inspectors how this has increased their motivation to read and discover new authors.
- Teaching and the curriculum are effective in supporting the development of pupils' emotional and social skills. Pupils are resilient and eager to be challenged. In this respect, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	133449
DfE registration number	204/6410
Inspection number	10055446

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Al Falah Educational Trust
Chair	Intiyaja Hayat
Headteacher	Mohammad Abu Hussain
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,600
Telephone number	020 8985 1059
Website	www.alfalahschool.org.uk
Email address	info@alfalahschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–6 July 2017

Information about this school

- Al Falah Primary School is an independent Muslim day school, providing full-time education for pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. It is located in a residential area of Clapton, London E5. There are currently 84 pupils on roll.
- All pupils are of the Muslim faith. The school aims to provide an education which will enable pupils to 'contribute positively to society as respectful citizens and good ambassadors for the Islamic faith'. Typically, national curriculum subjects are taught in the morning, and the Islamic curriculum is taught in the afternoon.
- The school has not identified any pupils who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities.

- The school's last full standard inspection was in July 2017. Its overall effectiveness was judged inadequate. A progress monitoring inspection took place in February 2018. The school did not meet all the regulations that were checked at this inspection, specifically the requirements of Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 7(a) and the standards in Part 8, related to the quality of leadership and management.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection was conducted at the request of the school's registration authority, the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted without notice.
- The DfE also requested that a progress monitoring inspection be incorporated into the full standard inspection. Inspectors were asked to check the progress the school had made in meeting the standards in Part 3 and Part 8 that remained unmet at the time of the progress monitoring inspection in February 2018.
- Following the progress monitoring inspection in February 2018, the school submitted an action plan to the registration authority which was deemed acceptable.
- Inspectors met with leaders, staff, governors and a member of the trust. Nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey were also taken into consideration.
- Informal discussions with parents were held at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the 13 responses to Parent View, including seven written comments.
- Inspectors toured the premises, reviewed documentation and looked at the school's website to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors reviewed policies and records related to safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also met with the leader with designated responsibility for safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from Year 3 and Year 6. Pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read to inspectors. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during visits to classrooms and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, computing, and Islamic studies. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maureen Okoye

Ofsted Inspector

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