

Inspection of Al-Khair Girls' School

109–117 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon CR0 6BB

Inspection dates: 28–30 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Al-Khair is a warm, welcoming and caring place for pupils. Pupils know that their teachers expect them to listen carefully and to work hard. Teachers explain things clearly so that pupils know what they must do. This helps pupils get on with their work. As a result, they achieve well in a wide range of academic subjects.

Leaders and teaching staff are dedicated and hard-working. They share a commitment to ensuring that all pupils do as well as they can. In practice, this means a strong curriculum which is planned and taught well. That said, some aspects of the key stage 3 curriculum require further development.

Pupils are prepared well for further education. Most go on to study academic subjects in schools and sixth-form colleges.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that promote their physical and mental health. For example, specialist coaches teach pupils a wide range of sports, such as fencing, tennis, taekwondo and Brazilian jujitsu. Pupils told us how pleased they were that such activities are part of the school's curriculum.

Pupils are safe and feel happy. They know who to talk to if they need help. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare at Al-Khair. They trust teachers and staff to deal with any bullying should it occur.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and the proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

The headteacher's high aspirations are shared by staff, governors and parents and carers. Supported by a capable team, she has raised expectations for what pupils can achieve. Leaders' work is sharply focused on ensuring that pupils receive a high-quality education. This enables all pupils to achieve well.

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and when. This means that pupils can build effectively on earlier learning. For instance, in science, Year 8 pupils used their knowledge of electricity and magnetism to explain how electromagnetism is used in recycling.

Teachers do not overwhelm pupils with too much new learning at once. For example, in mathematics, pupils can build on their existing knowledge of key concepts gradually. Teachers make sure that pupils are clear about the most important knowledge that they need to remember. They check regularly that pupils' knowledge is secure. Teachers identify those aspects of the curriculum that pupils need more help with. From their analysis of assessment information, staff have identified and closed gaps in some pupils' knowledge and skills in Years 10 and 11.

However, the curriculum for Years 7 to 9 has not been revised in sufficient detail to ensure that these knowledge gaps are addressed early on.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is well planned and taught. Coupled with citizenship, it provides pupils with a platform to debate a wide range of moral, social and ethical issues. Pupils rise to the challenge, using the knowledge they have gained to discuss important issues. Year 10 pupils, for instance, held an intelligent discussion about the role of the Cabinet in the government's decision-making process. The PSHE education and citizenship programme prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils achieve well in English and Arabic. They read and study a wide range of suitably challenging texts in both subjects. Teachers prepare pupils well for difficult texts by teaching the vocabulary and acquainting pupils with the knowledge of context. As a result, most pupils understand what the author is trying to convey, and they use this information to make better inferences.

Pupils are articulate, thoughtful and very well behaved. Their experience takes them beyond the taught curriculum and prepares them to be resilient, happy and secure in their future lives. Pupils learn about the importance of respect, especially for those with religions, cultures and backgrounds different to their own. However, many pupils do not have enough knowledge about other faiths represented in modern Britain. Leaders have already revised the religious education curriculum to address this but it is too early to evaluate the impact.

A new governing body has been in place since September 2019. Governors bring a range of skills from the world of business and provide good challenge on safeguarding and pupils' welfare. However, scrutiny by governors of what is planned and taught is not as strong as it should be. The proprietor is aware of this and suitable plans are in place to address this.

The proprietor has put in place efficient and effective systems for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Site staff carry out daily risk assessments of all parts of the building and maintain up-to-date records. Attention to detail is sharp in that any identified or reported concerns are swiftly dealt with.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils' safety and welfare are a priority. All staff undertake a range of safeguarding training, which includes the 'Prevent' duty, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation. This helps them to be vigilant and to recognise risks to pupils' safety. Staff know how to report any concerns they may have. The checks on the suitability of new staff to work with children are thorough.

There are strong working relationships with parents and with professionals from the local authority. The ethos of the school is caring and nurturing. Pupils feel safe to express their views. They trust adults in the school to help them with any difficulties. Pupils learn how to use the internet safely. They are clear about what to do if they see anything that worries them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Staff have not revised the key stage 3 curriculum in sufficient detail in the light of their analysis and evaluation of pupils' learning in key stage 4. This presents the risk of some misconceptions in subjects not being well addressed early on. This process has already started in the majority of curriculum subjects, including English, mathematics, science and Arabic. It should be extended to all curriculum subjects and the rigour of the process quality-assured by leaders. In light of the further curriculum developments required at key stage 3, transition arrangements apply.
- The proprietor established a new governing body in September 2019. Although the commitment to further improve the school is strong, governors do not provide enough scrutiny and challenge to the work of leaders. The proprietor should ensure that governors have the knowledge and skills they need to hold the school's leaders to account with sufficient rigour.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are exposed to the beliefs and values of other religions by inviting speakers who represent these faiths. However, despite this, knowledge about other religions is not well embedded in the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that there is a well-planned and systematic approach to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths.

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

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School details

Unique reference number	147027
DfE registration number	306/6019
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10123003
Type of school	Islamic secondary day school for girls
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Qasim Rashid Ahmad
Headteacher	Aisha Chaudhry
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,200
Telephone number	020 8662 8664
Website	http://alkhairschool.org.uk/
Email address	secondary@alkhairschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Al-Khair School was previously part of a mixed school for Muslim pupils aged four to 16 and located across two sites, primary and secondary, in the London Borough of Croydon.
- Following the school's full standard inspection in January 2019, leaders applied for Al-Khair to become three schools. To do this, leaders applied to change Al-Khair School to Al-Khair Boys' School, and to open two new schools: Al-Khair Girls' School and Al-Khair Preparatory School. The application was successful, and the three separate schools have been operating as such since September 2019.
- The current inspection is for Al-Khair Girls' School, a Muslim all-girls school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The individual proprietor of this school is the same for all three schools. A new governing body was appointed for the school in September 2019.

- The headteacher of Al-Khair Girls' School is also the leader of Al-Khair Boys' School. Both schools are in the same building. The boys' school is on the ground floor and the girls' school on the first floor. Both schools share specialist facilities, such as the science laboratory and sports hall, using them at different times. They also share staff, including heads of department, who teach in both schools.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- This is the school's first standard inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the headteacher, business manager and several heads of department, including the lead for PSHE education and citizenship. We also held discussions with the proprietor and all three members of the governing body.
- We met with the designated leader for safeguarding, looked at records and scrutinised the school's safeguarding practice.
- We observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day and spoke to staff about pupils' personal development. We also held discussions with two groups of pupils about their views of the quality of education the school provides.
- The inspection focused deeply on science, mathematics, English and Arabic. We met with subject leaders and pupils, visited lessons, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gerard Strong

Ofsted Inspector

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