

Inspection of Al-Khair Preparatory School

36 Pitlake, Croydon CR0 3RA

Inspection dates: 10–12 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **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?

Pupils feel safe and happy at this school. In the words of one pupil who spoke to us, 'This is a small school but a big family.' Teachers make sure pupils know what is expected of them. This means pupils behave very well, without needing to be reminded. Children in the early years get off to an exceptionally strong start in their personal development. This is because teachers make sure children learn the importance of helping each other and working hard right from the beginning of their school days.

Leaders and staff project a strong desire for every pupil to achieve well. They speak with a common voice when describing what they want pupils to learn and remember. Teachers make sure the agreed subject plans are taught accurately.

The wide range of interesting and well-led clubs and activities is a strength of this school. They are very well attended and include opportunities for pupils to develop talents beyond the curriculum.

Leaders consider pupils' well-being thoroughly. Pupils told us they feel confident to tell an adult if they think they are being bullied. They remember what teachers explain to them about different types of discrimination. Pupils feel proud of their knowledge of their own faith and their understanding of the beliefs of others.

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

The executive headteacher has concentrated on developing the skills of leaders responsible for subjects. This means everyone is clear about exactly what pupils need to be taught and in which order.

The proprietor and executive headteacher understand the independent school standards thoroughly and have made sure they are all met. They place a strong emphasis on providing and maintaining pleasant, well cared for premises. The requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the Early Years Foundation Stage are met at this school.

The proprietor has established a new governing body for the school and ensured that governors are being well trained and supported to challenge school leaders.

Teachers help pupils to understand knowledge that is new to them and bring previous learning back to the forefront of their minds when it is needed. In mathematics, we found that pupils could recall essential knowledge, such as multiplication facts, confidently and quickly. This is consistently the case across the broad range of subjects taught. For example, pupils could tell us their views of why particular events from history happened.

Leaders discover quickly when pupils are not remembering enough. They then take steps to change the way teachers put the agreed plans for learning into practice.

This has recently been the case in reading. Teachers have been concerned that weaker readers are not catching up quickly enough. Although phonics is taught right from the start of the Reception Year, leaders have asked teachers to reorganise reading lessons. There are early signs that this is improving standards of reading for pupils who find it hard to learn to read. However, these changes are in the early stages of being put in place. There remains, for example, some variation in how well teachers help pupils choose books which match their reading ability closely.

Older pupils and independent readers enjoy the wide range of books available in school. Teachers introduce pupils to literature they may otherwise be unaware of. For example, Year 6 pupils are enjoying studying Macbeth and are looking forward to seeing it performed in London.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education pupils receive is exceptional. Teachers plan lessons which build well on what pupils already know. They use lessons to discover pupils' misunderstandings. Teachers know what worries pupils and devote time to tackling this. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about dangerous substances they might find at home. Older pupils discuss and consider what they should do if someone tries to persuade them to try drugs.

Pupils also enjoy the links teachers have set up for them with a local Roman Catholic primary school. This helps them respect the views and beliefs of others. We saw children in the early years fully absorbed in the activities on offer to help them learn.

Across the school, pupils adapt their behaviour to the occasion. They do not need staff to remind them what is the right thing to do. For example, children in the Reception classes put scissors blade-down into the storage blocks to keep them safe. Older children share the playground thoughtfully with one another. In lessons, pupils work hard and know what they need to learn. They look at each other's work and give one another suggestions for making it even better.

Leaders and governors were concerned about the poor attendance of pupils in the first term of the school year. They could see the negative impact this was having on learning. Although the attendance of pupils who were absent most often has improved, there is more to be done to ensure pupils come to school enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors provide thorough training for staff to help them understand their roles in protecting children. For example, leaders have invited the local authority officer responsible for responding to allegations to talk to staff about why he is named in the school's safeguarding policy.

Pupils remember what teachers tell them about how to keep safe. Leaders make sure time and expertise are available to help pupils talk about what might be on their minds. For example, a counsellor holds a drop-in session for pupils each week.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders realised that some pupils who find it hard to learn to read were not catching up well enough. They adapted the way reading is taught. Some of these changes are recent and need to embed further. Leaders should make sure teachers help weaker readers to choose books which closely match their reading skills. They should check carefully that the changes to phonics lessons are ensuring pupils catch up quickly.
- Leaders and governors found that pupils' attendance was not good enough by the end of the first term in the current school year. They have taken prompt and effective action to make sure it is now improving rapidly. However, leaders should work with parents to ensure that attendance continues to improve.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

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

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	147184
DfE registration number	306/6020
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10123007
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Qasim Rashid Ahmad
Headteacher	Almas Iqbal
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4760
Telephone number	020 8662 8664
Website	http://alkhairschool.org.uk
Email address	primary@alkhairschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Al-Khair Preparatory School opened as a separately registered school in July 2019. It is registered to admit up to 320 pupils between the ages of four and 11 years. This was the school's first full inspection.
- The school has a distinctive Islamic ethos and offers Islamic studies to pupils as part of the curriculum each week.
- The school has not identified any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 proprietor body and a member of the governing body.
- We also met with the executive headteacher and assistant headteacher to discuss their plans for improvement and self-evaluation.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, PSHE, history and geography. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, talked with pupils, teachers and curriculum leaders. We also heard some pupils read.
- We spoke to pupils at different times during the school day and visited some after school activities.
- We reviewed safeguarding records, including the school's checks on the suitability of staff. We spoke with the designated safeguarding lead and with staff about safeguarding procedures.
- We toured the premises and scrutinised the records of checks and risk assessments kept by leaders.
- We spoke with parents at the start of the school day. We also considered the 48 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and 46 written comments received from parents.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted Inspector

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