

Leicester Islamic Academy

320 London Road, Leicester LE2 2PJ

Inspection dates

21–23 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the last inspection, the proprietor, leaders and trustees have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards.
- Leaders and governors have high aspirations for the school. They create an ethos of respect and tolerance that prepares pupils effectively for life in modern, multicultural Britain.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's performance. As a result, they have identified appropriate priorities for improvement and have plans in place to address these priorities.
- The curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in a range of subjects. Enrichment opportunities are supported by the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural themes that run through pupils' daily lessons.
- The recently introduced assessment system has enabled leaders to identify where pupils need additional support. Consequently, interventions have been effective and these pupils have made good progress.
- Children get off to a good start in their learning in the early years. Increasingly, there are opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning.
- The headteacher has encouraged staff to develop their leadership roles to enable the school to move forward more quickly. However, new leaders are not yet fully involved in monitoring the work of the school and driving improvements.
- Teaching has improved and is good overall. Some teaching is highly effective. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent and there are still occasions where some pupils, particularly the most able, do not move on quickly enough in their learning.
- Most pupils achieve standards appropriate for their age by the end of key stage 2. However, not enough of the most able pupils achieve the higher standards they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school and pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - embedding the existing good practice and using opportunities to share effective practice
 - providing training and professional development that is tailored to individuals' needs
 - making effective use of assessment information to plan pupils' next steps of learning.
- Improve outcomes for the most able pupils so that they achieve the higher standards for their age by:
 - using assessment information to set ambitious targets for rapid progress
 - deepening their knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects, in particular their reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Develop the skills of those new to leadership roles by:
 - ensuring that all leaders have a thorough understanding of whole-school improvement priorities
 - providing the necessary training and experience to enable new leaders to become more effective in contributing to further improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor, leaders and trustees have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards. Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have successfully tackled the weaknesses and unmet standards identified in progress monitoring visits.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and have high aspirations for the pupils, reflected in the school motto 'Excellence Everyday'. They promote a culture of respect and tolerance, and pupils develop a good understanding of how the school's Islamic ethos and British values combine to prepare them for later life in modern, multicultural Britain.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school well and have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what can be improved further. Regular monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out to check the progress being made to address key improvement priorities.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils develop sound literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge. It also includes a range of other subjects so that pupils develop their understanding in science, technology and humanities as well as their religious studies. There are enrichment opportunities that engage and inspire pupils. In 'special' weeks, such as charity week, anti-bullying week or storytelling week, pupils explore a range of topics that link learning across the curriculum. There are strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural themes running through all aspects of learning.
- Leaders ensure that lessons also have a specific focus for Islamic ethos and British values that underpin and support the learning objective. For example, in an English lesson where pupils worked together to write poems, it was made explicit that pupils are expected to respect the ideas of others and to ensure that all participants have the same opportunities to contribute to the discussion. As a result, pupils were able to consider a range of ideas in depth and this led to high-quality outcomes.
- Teachers value the professional development opportunities they are given. Regular training is leading to greater consistency and improvements in the overall quality of teaching. There are now examples of highly effective teaching that provide a model for less-experienced colleagues to improve their practice.
- The recently introduced assessment system has enabled leaders to develop an accurate view of pupils' achievement. They have identified where pupils need additional support and have provided effective interventions that have helped pupils to make good progress. Assessment information is increasingly being used to set targets and track progress of all groups of pupils, but this is still at an early stage of development.
- The headteacher has extended the leadership team and encouraged staff to take on roles where they can play a more active part in moving the school forward. While senior leaders are established in their roles, new leaders are still developing their understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are not yet fully involved in monitoring the work of the school and driving improvements.

Governance

- Governors work closely with school leaders to set the strategic direction of the school and promote an aspirational culture that has high expectations of pupils and aims to help them achieve both academically and personally.
- The chair of the governing body holds weekly meetings with the headteacher to check on progress towards the school's key improvement priorities. He promotes a 'no excuse culture' and provides a significant level of challenge to school leaders.
- Governors are well informed and know the school well. Since the last inspection, a number of new governors have been recruited. They have specific skills that are beneficial to the school and, through regular visits, they provide both support and challenge to leaders in monitoring the work of the school.
- Governors ensure that they attend events for parents so that they are available to discuss current issues and respond to any questions or concerns that may arise. They make every effort to be 'open and transparent at all times'.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy, available on the school's website, reflects the most recent government guidance. The school's procedures for safeguarding are clearly set out and there are systems in place to record and follow up any concerns that arise. The school's safeguarding officers meet regularly with a named governor to review the school's practice and procedures.
- Training and regular updates are provided for staff and governors to ensure that they can meet their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. For example, staff have received training in the 'Prevent' duty to safeguard pupils against radicalisation and extremism. Staff know the signs to look for and what action to take if they have a concern.
- Pupils learn, at appropriate levels for their age, how to recognise and manage risk and how to keep themselves safe, for example online. Pupils also know that they can ask for help and they have confidence in their teachers to help them if they have any worries.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved as a result of regular training and professional development. Some teaching is now highly effective and enables pupils to make rapid progress.
- Good relationships and high expectations are evident. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and are particularly enthusiastic about practical activities. For example, Year 4 pupils made representations of the digestive system to model what happens to food after it is eaten.
- Teachers frequently question pupils to check their understanding. Where questioning is most effective, it also challenges pupils to explain their learning and justify their opinions. Pupils are also encouraged to discuss their ideas with others, providing opportunities for them to develop their skills as listeners and consider the ideas presented by others.

- Pupils' books are generally neat and well presented. They show that pupils make progress over time and that work is at an appropriate standard for their age. Pupils learn to assess their own and each other's work according to given criteria.
- Assessment is accurate and teachers record pupils' achievements at regular intervals. Because the current system has only recently been introduced, teachers are not yet using the information to its full extent when planning next steps of learning.
- There are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in some classes teachers do not respond quickly if pupils' attention wanders. There are occasions when some pupils, particularly the most able, do not move on quickly enough in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and try hard to do their best. They know the benefits of eating well and exercising to keep themselves healthy.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Both pupils and parents say that the school is a safe place. One pupil described the school as 'a second home', and feels 'as safe here as at home'. Pupils know that adults will help them if they have any worries.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare but that teachers would deal with any incidents swiftly and effectively. They understand different types of bullying, for example cyber bullying, and have learned strategies to seek help and stay safe.
- Pupils are tolerant and respectful of others, and enjoy learning about other religions and cultures. They explained to the inspector how they are 'all different, all equal'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a harmonious environment where pupils work and play well together, both in the classroom and outside in the playground. Pupils behave well in lessons and are generally attentive. However, there are some pupils who are distracted more easily and occasionally they lose concentration and progress slows.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average for most pupils. There are some pupils who have higher levels of absence because they are temporary residents in this country. The school follows up any absences quickly and records reasons for absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over time, pupils make good progress overall. School assessment information shows that most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points, including those who do not achieve the standard expected for their age.
- Most pupils achieve at least the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

- Pupils of different ages read with confidence and accuracy. The most able pupils read fluently and demonstrate good levels of comprehension, using the text effectively to find information or to support an opinion.
- Pupils are developing mathematical fluency and are confident in a range of calculations. Although there is evidence of problem-solving and applying their knowledge of calculation, there is less evidence that they are developing their reasoning skills to the same extent.
- The most able pupils do not always have the opportunity to work at greater depth and therefore some do not achieve the higher standards of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is led enthusiastically and effectively, and this is reflected in the variety of interesting learning opportunities. Teachers have a good knowledge of the requirements of the early years curriculum and children's progress is tracked carefully. The school works with representatives from the local authority and colleagues from other schools to check that assessments are accurate.
- There are good relationships with parents and there is an increasing number of opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's learning, for example through regular 'stay and play' sessions.
- Teaching is effective overall. Children have access to a range of activities, some of which are supported by the teacher. Others they can do independently. Children make progress in all areas of learning, sometimes from low starting points.
- Children behave well, particularly when they are learning through play. They share resources and work cooperatively. For example, a group of boys used construction kits to make a building with roads leading up to it.
- The curriculum is varied and often follows the interests of the children. Consequently, children are engaged and sustain their concentration well. However, where learning is more formal, for example in phonics sessions, children sometimes become inattentive and teachers do not intervene quickly enough when children's interest levels drop.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is improving but is still below the national average. Some children who do not achieve a good level of development have joined the school speaking English as an additional language. They make good progress in learning English but need to catch up in some areas of learning. However, most children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Safeguarding is effective and all statutory requirements for early years provision are met.

School details

Unique reference number	120335
DfE registration number	856/6007
Inspection number	10039180

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Number of part-time pupils	29
Proprietor	Board of trustees
Chair	Hussein Suleman
Headteacher	Shanaz Khan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,900
Telephone number	0116 270 5343
Website	www.lia.uk.net
Email address	headteacher@lia.uk.net
Date of previous inspection	7–9 October 2015

Information about this school

- Leicester Islamic Academy was opened in 1982 by the LIA Trust who are the proprietors. The proprietors are also responsible for LIA Gems and the Madani secondary schools in Leicester.
- The school provides both Islamic and secular teaching. Its aims are 'to strive for excellence in all areas of academic and spiritual development'.
- The school is registered for 400 pupils. Nursery children attend part time. There are morning and afternoon sessions.
- There are too few pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities for

their achievement to be reported on separately. There are a number of pupils at the early stages of learning English. The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

- Since the last full inspection, there have been two progress monitoring inspections in May and November 2016. On both occasions, there were unmet standards.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher and a number of new governors have joined the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector toured the school with the headteacher and carried out a check on the premises.
- Inspectors visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. Some of these visits were carried out with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils and listened to pupils read. They also spoke with pupils informally at other times during the inspection.
- Working alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher, inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks and reviewed the school's assessment information.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body, a group of governors and the school's improvement partner. Discussions also took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the early years leader.
- Inspectors talked with a number of parents informally and took into account 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The lead inspector carried out a check of the school's website to confirm that the required information and policies, including the safeguarding policy, are available.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, school policies and a number of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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