

Abu Bakr Girls School

154–160 Wednesbury Road, Palfrey, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 4JJ

Inspection dates

16–18 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for the experiences, opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of adult life. Pupils are confident, thoughtful, respectful and hard working. Their behaviour is impeccable. This is the result of the extremely well planned and skilfully delivered programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are full of praise for the care and support they receive from teachers. Teachers are highly committed to ensuring that pupils succeed.
- Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. They guide pupils skilfully to acquire secure knowledge, skills and understanding. This leads to the high standards that many pupils achieve.
- Leaders provide high-quality training and support for teachers. This ensures that less-experienced staff quickly gain the skills they need to become effective teachers.
- Leaders understand the requirements of the independent school standards and ensure that these are met in full.
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. Most achieve well for their ages. This is because leaders and teachers keep a close check on pupils' attainment and put in place effective support for anyone who begins to fall behind.
- However, some of the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they might. This is because teachers and leaders are less attuned to the needs of pupils who grasp learning quickly or whose work could be of even higher quality.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. They make swift progress in acquiring the skills they need to prepare them for more formal schooling. By the time they leave the primary school, pupils are well prepared for the demands of the secondary curriculum.
- Governors hold leaders to account for the quality of pupils' outcomes. The proprietor seeks external expertise and challenge to ensure that he has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. This process has recently shown governors that the most able pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

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?

- Ensure that the most able pupils consistently achieve the higher standards of which they are capable by making sure that:
 - teachers are quick to spot pupils who have grasped an idea quickly, or who have not performed as well as they could
 - teachers move these pupils on to harder work as soon as they are ready and insist their work is of the highest possible standard
 - leaders track the progress of the most able pupils more closely to ensure that their attainment is as high as it could be.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **Good**

- Leaders are effective in ensuring that all the requirements for the independent school standards and early years foundation stage are met.
- The proprietor has an ambitious vision for the school to provide excellent academic outcomes in an ethos that strongly promotes pupils' personal development and their Islamic values. All staff share a strong commitment to this vision. As a result, the school achieves some of its aims extremely well and continues to improve further overall.
- The school is exceptionally successful at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The carefully planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education is used very well to teach pupils the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths (and no faith) and beliefs. As a result, pupils' respect for other people is genuine and deeply held.
- The curriculum is broad and deep. It is very well designed to support pupils to achieve well academically within a secure framework of Islamic values. The formal curriculum is exceptionally well supported by an impressive range of extra-curricular opportunities. A wide range of well-chosen visits, visitors and activities, in and out of school, provides pupils with rich, meaningful, memorable experiences. As a result of its design and effective implementation, the curriculum has a notable impact on pupils' welfare, personal development and on their academic outcomes.
- Leaders are careful to appoint teachers who share the school's vision and values. They support teachers effectively in building their skills and developing their practice. This is why the quality of teaching is effective.
- Leaders have a realistic view of the school's effectiveness and set out appropriate plans to tackle weaknesses that are found. This view is mainly formed by leaders' regular checking of pupils' attainment in a wide range of subjects. More recently, leaders' self-evaluation has been sharpened by use of an external consultant. In this way, leaders have ensured that teachers provide effective support for pupils who start to fall behind where they should be for their ages.
- However, leaders have only recently begun to focus their attention to the most able pupils. This is why some of these pupils have not been challenged enough in the past and why they have not progressed as quickly as they otherwise might have done.

Governance

- The proprietor and governing body:
 - are resolute in the pursuit of their vision of academic excellence within an ethos that promotes the school's Islamic values
 - use data about pupils' attainment well to challenge leaders about the school's effectiveness, particularly about pupils who need to catch up

- seek and welcome external expertise to help identify ways in which the school could improve further
- have recently identified that the school could do more to speed up the progress made by the most able pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. These are set out in a comprehensive policy which is available on the school's website. The policy takes appropriate account of current government requirements.
- The deputy headteacher ensures that all staff are well trained in a wide range of safeguarding issues. As a result, they are confident in spotting and reporting concerns. Where concerns are noted, they are followed up quickly and thoroughly to ensure that the necessary information is passed on to the local authority.
- Leaders work very closely with appropriate agencies to ensure that pupils are well protected, supported and safe. For example, leaders are very proactive in taking steps to ensure that pupils are safe from the dangers of sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers work very hard to do the best for their pupils. Pupils value this highly. The strong, trusting relationship between teachers and pupils make a big difference to pupils' outcomes. Pupils are motivated to try their hardest in lessons and apply themselves very well to their learning.
- Teachers are committed to continuously improving their practice. They welcome the training and support provided to help them do this. As a result, new and inexperienced teachers quickly develop the skills they need. More-experienced staff provide highly effective role models for their newer colleagues.
- Many teachers are skilled at using questions to prompt pupils to think deeply and to reflect on challenging ideas or concepts. For example, during the inspection a group of secondary pupils were discussing why people might develop extremist views and why they might become radicalised. The teacher's questions helped them to discuss this sensitive subject maturely and in a very considered way.
- Teachers are very knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. This helps them set interesting work that enables pupils to develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers also use this knowledge to help pupils understand where their work could be improved. Teachers do this effectively in line with the school's policy.
- Teachers work well in partnership with parents and carers to promote pupils' learning. For example, teachers and parents discuss pupils' progress regularly. Teachers set homework tasks that reinforce the learning from lessons. Each year, teachers provide a detailed summary of pupils' progress and attainment in all subjects in a helpful written report.

- Teachers take every opportunity in lessons to reinforce the school's Islamic values and to promote pupils' personal development. For example, lessons often include an explanation of how the subject matter being taught relates to passages from the Quran. In addition, teachers ensure that pupils learn to reflect honestly about the quality of their work and to make critical evaluation of the work of other class members. Pupils do this in an informed, sensible and supportive way.
- Teachers keep a close check on whether pupils are working at the standards typically expected for their ages. They plan work that helps pupils catch up quickly if they are falling behind. In lessons, teachers are alert to anyone who is struggling. They adjust lessons carefully to reinforce the learning and help pupils grasp the idea. This is why almost all pupils in all year groups and subjects make swift progress and achieve high standards.
- However, teachers are not as adept at spotting when pupils have grasped a concept and need to move on to harder work. Pupils who finish their work quickly sometimes have to sit and wait for others to catch up before the lesson moves on. Similarly, work set for the most able pupils often requires them to repeat work they can already do, so is too easy. This is why this group of pupils does not consistently make the rapid progress they are capable of. As a result, the standards achieved are not as high as they could be.
- In addition, pupils' books show that sometimes teachers do not pick up on careless errors made by the most able. This is evident in all parts of the school. For example, some primary pupils' books showed that pupils had been allowed to continue to spell basic words incorrectly, even though the teacher corrected a misspelled harder word. Similarly, some pupils in Year 9 do not use capital letters and full stops consistently in their writing. This reduces the quality of their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly self-confident, very motivated learners. They are impressively self-aware and know exactly what it takes to be successful.
- Pupils are ambitious for their future careers. The school supports them exceptionally well in following their chosen paths and equipping them for the world of work. From key stage 2 onwards, pupils are encouraged to consider their options and identify what they want to do when they leave the school. The careers programme ensures that pupils get the help they need to apply for their chosen course or apprenticeship. Almost all pupils in the past have gone on to further courses of study and entered a wider range of professions.
- Primary-aged pupils experience the world of finance and commerce. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils held an 'Enterprise Day'. They organised a selection of fun activities and stalls which were visited by pupils in the other year groups. They

interacted confidently with their older and younger peers and handled taking money and giving change with aplomb.

- Pupils believe they have a responsibility to play a positive role in society. They make a substantial contribution to the local and wider community. For example, they raise large sums of money for a wide range of charities and take part in community events, such as providing hampers to the local hospital.
- Pupils show a great degree of respect to one another. They say bullying in any form is unheard of within the school environment. However, they are aware of the risks of bullying and other dangers of online activity and are well prepared to protect themselves.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is exemplary. For example, snowfall during the inspection resulted in the need for an indoor breaktime. The secondary pupils chatted sensibly in the hall while they bought and ate their snacks. When breaktime was over, they immediately and quietly filed back to their classrooms without the need for direction.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons makes a notable contribution to their learning. They almost always follow instructions diligently so that no time is wasted. On the very rare occasions when a reminder is needed, a quick word from the teacher is usually enough to refocus the pupil immediately.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the high rates of their attendance. They rarely miss a day and make sure they catch up on any missed learning when absence is unavoidable.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes are good because most make consistently strong progress in a wide range of subjects. They develop secure skills in reading, writing and mathematics as well as in communication. As a result, they are well prepared to go on to the next stage of their education or training.
- Standards in the school are generally high. For example, the proportion of pupils who achieve five or more GCSE examinations at grade 4 and above and grade 5 and above has risen steadily since the previous inspection. It is above the national average.
- The small number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported. As a result, they make good progress towards attaining appropriate standards for their ages. Similarly, pupils who need to catch up succeed in doing so because teachers give them the extra help they need.
- However, the most able pupils do not make the sustained strong progress of which they are capable. This is because they are not challenged well enough. Teachers and leaders have not, until recently, paid sufficient attention to this group to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as they might.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has a detailed understanding of the strengths in the early years, but is also aware of where further development is needed. She takes swift action when weaknesses are identified. This ensures that children receive a consistently good quality of education. They make good progress across the Reception Year and are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Regular training leads to continuous improvement in the quality of teaching. Staff work closely together, sharing ideas to support and develop children's learning. This is why the quality of teaching is good in the early years.
- Children generally join the Reception Year with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. Teachers assess precisely what children can and cannot do and identify what their interests are. Teachers then plan activities that capture children's imagination and build their skills quickly. For example, this year leaders recognised that children started school with limited understanding of the world around them. Staff planned a series of activities, including visits within the local community, to help children make progress in this area of learning.
- Children behave well in class and around the school. They are articulate and keen to share their learning with visitors. Children are confident and happy learners. Secure, trusting relationships between all children and staff are evident across the classes. This helps children to settle quickly and learn to concentrate. In turn, this supports the good progress they make.
- Staff involve parents well in their children's learning. For example, they hold workshops to help parents understand what their children learn in school, and how they can support this at home. Parents' evenings are held regularly and parents can record any concerns or queries they may have in a daily communication book.
- Staff take time to get to know children's individual needs. They ensure that the right support and help is in place to help those who have additional needs. Where necessary, staff work well with external agencies to ensure that these needs are met. As a result, children who find learning more difficult make particularly good progress.
- Sometimes, teachers miss chances to move the learning of the most able children even further forward. For example, some children demonstrate a high level of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics but do not have enough activities and opportunities to challenge them sufficiently. Consequently, while children's progress is good overall, the most able children do not make as much progress as they could.
- All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Appropriate paediatric first aid is in place, and all staff know, understand and apply the safeguarding policies and procedures.

School details

Unique reference number	132750
DfE registration number	335/6010
Inspection number	10038830

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	All-through Islamic day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed, ages 1 to 11 Girls, ages 11 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Mr Muhammad Luqman
Chair	Mr Muhammad Luqman
Headteacher	Mohammed Ramzan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,600
Telephone number	01922 626 829
Website	www.abubakrgirlschool.org
Email address	info@abubakrgirlschool.org
Date of previous inspection	28–31 March 2011

Information about this school

- Abu Bakr Girls' School is an independent all-through school that caters for boys and girls up to the age of 11 and for girls up to the age of 16.
- The school is part of the Abu Bakr Trust.
- The proprietor is also the chair of the governing board.
- The school's vision is to lay the foundations for the building of an Islamic personality, providing its pupils with the highest standard of education.

- The school is registered for 909 pupils and currently has 460 pupils on roll.
- All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Few pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. No pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- No pupils are disadvantaged.
- No pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- The school does not use any alternative provision
- The school's last full inspection was carried out by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate in March 2011. The school was judged to be good. Ofsted carried out an emergency inspection of the school in September 2016 at the request of the Department for Education. All standards checked at the emergency inspection were found to be met.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors toured the school to examine the premises.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning by visiting lessons, talking to pupils as they worked and looking at the work in their books.
- Inspectors met with: the headteacher and deputy headteacher; other school staff; the proprietor, who is also chair of the governing body, and another governor; and groups of pupils in Years 6, 9, 10 and 11. Inspectors spoke informally with other staff and pupils as they moved around school.
- Inspectors took account of the 57 staff survey submissions and the six responses to the Parent View online survey. An inspector spoke with several parents as they dropped their children at the primary school.
- A range of documents was examined, including: the school's checks on how well it is doing and its plans for improvement; minutes of meetings of the governing body; curriculum plans; policies relating to health and safety and pupils' welfare; and information about pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sandy Hayes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Pritchard	Her Majesty's Inspector

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