

Salafi Independent School

472 Coventry Road, Birmingham B10 0UG

Inspection dates

23–25 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and directors have not ensured that all the independent school standards relating to the quality of pupils' education are met. As a result, too few pupils reach the expected standards in writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- In 2015, at the end of Key Stage 1, no pupils achieved the expected level in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, only one third of pupils achieved the level expected for their age.
- Boys underachieve significantly in their writing.
- Pupils in most classes have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills, both in their English lessons and in the other subjects they are taught.
- Adults do not have high enough expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve. Consequently, this group of pupils are not routinely provided with hard enough work. As a result, their progress is too slow.
- Leaders and directors do not have an accurate view of the progress that pupils are making because information is not collected, analysed or presented in a coherent or systematic way.
- The checks made on the quality of teaching are neither frequent nor rigorous enough to enable teachers to have a clear view of how to help pupils to make faster progress. Performance management is not in place for teachers or leaders.
- Teachers do not use the information they have about what pupils know and can do to plan lessons. Consequently, some pupils have work that is either too easy or too hard or have to repeat work that they have already done.
- Leaders and directors have been too slow to make improvements in some of the areas identified at the last inspection.
- Directors rely solely on the information provided to them by the headteacher and have no systems in place to find out for themselves about the work of the school.
- The school development plan does not contain any measurable targets for improvement. This means that the leaders do not know if their work is successful. In addition, the directors cannot challenge the senior leaders or hold them accountable for their improvement work.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have created a culture where the focus on the school's Islamic ethos is balanced well with developing respect for those from other cultural and faith backgrounds.
- Policies and procedures to keep pupils safe are effective.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are confident, friendly and articulate. They feel safe, are keen to learn and like attending school.
- Teaching in Year 1 is effective and pupils make good progress in that year group.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring there is a sense of urgency about the improvements that need to be made
 - implementing a development plan that accurately identifies the areas for improvement
 - including measurable targets and precise timescales in the school development plan to enable improvements to be tracked and to allow the directors to challenge leaders and hold them to account
 - ensuring that directors have systems in place that enable them to find out for themselves about the work of the school
 - collecting, analysing and summarising the progress made by classes and groups of pupils to identify any underachievement and swiftly implement plans to address this
 - ensuring the directors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the rates of progress and attainment of pupils
 - increasing the frequency of the checks made on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and providing staff with precise feedback on how to improve
 - involving leaders at all levels in the checking of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - implementing a performance management system to ensure all staff understand how they can contribute to and be held accountable for pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, as a result, accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that all adults have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all the subjects that are taught
 - supporting teachers to adapt the commercial schemes of work that are being used in order to meet the different needs and abilities of the pupils in each class
 - ensuring that teachers use the information about what pupils already know and can do to prepare lessons that provide enough support for the lower-ability pupils and give the most-able pupils enough challenge
 - providing pupils with opportunities to practise their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in longer pieces of writing in a range of subjects
 - making sure that teachers are alert to how well pupils are progressing within lessons and move them on to more challenging work as soon as they are ready.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - Ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, is implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a)).
 - Ensure that the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils including those with an education, health and care plan (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(b)(i)).
 - Ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress (paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(h)).
 - Ensure that teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they can increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3, 3(a)).
 - Ensure that the teaching in the school involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (paragraph 3, 3(c)).
 - Ensure that teaching shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3, 3(d)).
 - Ensure that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3, 3(g)).
 - The proprietor must make sure that leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)).
 - The proprietor must ensure that leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders and directors have not ensured that all the independent school standards relating to the quality of pupils' education are met. They have not ensured that teaching is consistently good enough to allow all pupils to make good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly in writing, by the time they leave the school.
- The actions taken since the last inspection to improve the work of the directors and to ensure that teachers use assessment information to help them to plan for pupils of different abilities have been at best too slow in their implementation and at worst ineffective.
- The checks made on the quality of teaching are not frequent enough and are not followed up thoroughly to ensure that teachers know precisely how to improve. Not all teachers with responsibilities for subjects are fully involved in making checks on their subject area. In addition, leaders do not link the rates of pupils' progress to their judgements about the quality of teaching. As a result, they have an overgenerous view of teaching and lack a sense of urgency about improving it. Teachers are not routinely set targets related to the progress that pupils make.
- Information about pupils' attainment is collected regularly and is accurate. However, leaders do not use this information to check how much progress pupils are making from their starting points. As a result, leaders and trustees cannot diagnose or prioritise precise areas for improvement.
- School improvement planning is not systematic or rigorous. Although, individually, different leaders can identify weaknesses that need to be addressed, these issues are not brought together in any organised way. Consequently, while all leaders focus on making improvements, there are no timescales for their work or any measurable way of checking if their actions have had an impact on pupils' progress. This makes it impossible for the headteacher and the directors to have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The headteacher has focused his attention on ensuring that significant improvements have been made to the premises and that the policies and procedures for keeping children safe are in place and followed consistently. This work has been successful. Classrooms and other areas where learning takes place are bright and stimulating and the arrangements for safeguarding are effective. For example, when pupils leave the school mid-year, leaders check on the destinations of these pupils and work with the local authority to make sure that no pupil goes missing. Staff are aware of the procedures for keeping children safe, including from the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. However, in focusing on these areas, insufficient attention has been paid to the quality of teaching.
- Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The curriculum contains an appropriate range of subjects and includes a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors, visit places of interest and learn from visitors to the school. As a result, while the quality of teaching does not ensure pupils reach the levels expected in some areas, leaders have created a culture where behaviour and pupils' personal development are good. However, the resources that have been purchased to support the teaching of each subject are not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about British institutions and values. Pupils have visited the local council chambers and the Houses of Parliament, and local police officers have visited the school. As a result, pupils understand the consequences of breaking the law, how politicians are elected and that everyone has a right to their own opinion. Leaders have not shied away from tackling complex current affairs. For example, older pupils have discussed their views on extremism and have identified ways of achieving a resolution to extremist behaviour.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are able to explain this appropriately based on the legal system and in terms of their faith. Leaders have been successful in ensuring that pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of their own faith while maintaining a healthy respect for those from other cultures and faiths. One pupil summed this up in their work about Martin Luther King when they wrote 'I have a dream that people will realise that we are all the same, just a bit different, and everyone will be equal'.
- Since the previous inspection leaders have rightly introduced the teaching of religious education to ensure that pupils know and understand about other faiths and those without faith. Pupils' knowledge of this is improving but it is early days and there is still work to do to in this area.

■ The governance of the school

- The governance of the school is inadequate.
- The directors do not have an accurate view of the progress that pupils make and the standards that they reach. This is because they do not receive enough information from the school leaders. They do not provide appropriate levels of challenge to the headteacher.
- The directors do not have any systems in place to find out for themselves about the work of the school. They are too reliant on the information that they receive from the headteacher.
- The directors are supportive of the school and its aims and are ambitious for the school to improve. They fulfil their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding, the upkeep of the premises and the provision of quality resources for pupils to use.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate overall because it does not meet the needs, aptitudes and abilities of all the pupils in the school. As a result, pupils do not reach the levels expected for their age, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to inform their planning. As a result, they do not adapt the commercial schemes of work that are used to meet the needs of the most- and least-able pupils. Some teachers set tasks that suit only the middle-ability pupils and are too easy for the most able and too hard for the least able.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge but this is not used effectively to make sure that pupils make good progress. This is because teachers are not always ambitious enough about what the most-able pupils can achieve. They play safe and provide pupils with work that is too straightforward and does not stretch their thinking.
- Teachers do not check often enough if pupils are ready to move on to something trickier or ready to apply their learning in different situations. In addition, teachers are not careful enough in their planning to prevent pupils from having to repeat work they have previously done. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in their writing because they do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply their writing skills. Pupils' workbooks show that the worksheets that are used in many subjects do not provide pupils with enough space to write their answers and ideas. In addition, in English lessons, while a good proportion of time is spent in completing spelling, grammar and punctuation exercises, pupils have few opportunities to apply these skills to writing for different purposes, for example writing letters, stories or poems, or when reporting their findings in science or showing their knowledge in history.
- Good practice is evident in some classes. In Year 1, lessons are generally well planned. Teachers use practical resources well to motivate pupils and help them to learn. For example, in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, pupils used cubes, measuring tapes, rulers and metre sticks to practise their measuring skills, both in the classroom and in the playground, and in Year 6 pupils watched a film clip about dragons to stimulate their discussions.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are used to good effect to support learning in Years 1 and 2. They are well briefed about the purpose of the lesson. They use questioning well to encourage pupils to give extended answers to explain their thinking and they use praise appropriately to reward and encourage pupils.
- The teaching of early reading is effective. Years 1 and 2 staff are skilled at teaching phonics (the sounds letters make). Pupils quickly learn their sounds and develop confidence to have a go at new and unfamiliar words. Pupils' understanding of what they read is not yet as advanced as their ability to decode the words.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have been successful in creating a well-ordered and stimulating environment. Pupils feel safe in school and are encouraged to share their own ideas and respect the opinions of others.

- Pupils' social skills are good and they are friendly and polite. They are confident when speaking to adults, including visitors, and demonstrate a pride in their school. For example, a group of pupils enthusiastically gave an inspector a tour of the playground, garden and healthy tuck shop.
- Pupils enjoy the range of responsibilities that they are given, for example as playground buddies and school councillors. These develop their leadership and communication skills and enhance their self-confidence.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and pupils feel that adults listen to their ideas. Pupils spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about how the adults had implemented their ideas about a school garden and some additional equipment at playtime.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils have benefited from a range of trips, for example to a local art gallery and museum, the space centre, a trip to the river and a camping trip to Wales. Pupils understand how to keep themselves clean and are knowledgeable about the importance of eating healthily.
- Pupils have learned about keeping themselves safe in a range of situations, for example in case of fire, when crossing the road and when using the internet. Pupils have also learned, in an age-appropriate way, about keeping safe from sexual abuse, through the use of the NSPCC 'PANTS' campaign. Older pupils have benefited from discussing the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. A group of Years 4 and 5 pupils were very articulate in their conversation with an inspector about the recent attacks in Paris and their view that 'the people who did this have not read the Qur'an properly'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff, parents and pupils agree that this is the case. Pupils respond quickly to adults' instructions and demonstrate good manners spontaneously. Adults are good role models in this regard.
- Playtimes are busy, sociable times. Pupils state that teasing occasionally occurs but bullying is extremely rare. They understand what constitutes verbal, physical and cyber bullying. School records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are rare and are followed up swiftly and thoroughly when they occur.
- Lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. They are characterised by sensible and enthusiastic pupils who pay attention even when the learning is too hard or too easy.
- There was a difference between the attendance of boys and girls during the last academic year with boys attending less well than girls. This gap has been eradicated and attendance is now above the national average for primary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Leaders do not routinely measure pupils' progress from their starting points. As a result, although information is readily available about pupils' attainment, leaders do not have an overview of how well individuals or groups of pupils are progressing. Evidence from pupils' workbooks show that progress, particularly in writing, is too slow for all pupils.
- Across the school there is insufficient provision made for the most-able pupils. As a result, these pupils routinely underachieve. Similarly, boys' achievement in writing is significantly lower than that of the girls, which is also too low.
- In Years 5 and 6, the lower-ability pupils make slow progress in writing and mathematics. Evidence from pupils' workbooks and from observations in lessons, shows that work is sometimes overly difficult and too little support is provided.
- Too few pupils in Years 2 to 6 are at or above the standards expected for their age in writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for the expectations in the next stage of their education. For example, at the end of 2015 there were no pupils in Year 2 at the age-appropriate standard in writing. In addition, less than one third of boys currently in Years 4 and 5 are able to write at the expected standard. There is some recent evidence that rates of progress have begun to improve, but this is too slow. This is in part because pupils have too few opportunities to apply their writing skills in English lessons and across other areas of their learning.
- By comparison, pupils make stronger progress and achieve better in reading. School assessment information shows that, in 2015, almost all pupils leaving the school in Year 6 reached the expected standard (Level 4) in reading, with over half reaching the higher Level 5.

- Pupils make rapid progress in their early reading skills when they join the school. In the Year 1 phonics test, an above-average proportion reached the expected standard. As many of these pupils started school in Year 1 with no previous school experience and limited understanding of the sounds letters make, this demonstrates at least good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	133603
Inspection number	10006855
DfE registration number	330/6103
Type of school	Primary
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Salafi Independent School Limited
Chair	Mohammed Mousuf Ahmed
Headteacher	Mohammed Mousuf Ahmed
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,640
Telephone number	0121 772 4567
Website	www.salafiindependentschool.com
Email address	headteacher@salafischool.com
Date of previous inspection	12 December 2013

Information about this school

- Salafi Independent School is a primary Muslim day school for boys and girls. It opened in September 2002 and it is registered for 160 pupils aged five to 11. There are currently 154 on roll.
- There are no disabled pupils or pupils with special educational needs at the school.
- All the families that send their children to the school are practising Muslims. Several children travel quite a distance from other local authorities to attend this school. The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds including Pakistani, Bangladeshi, African and European heritages.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2013. A proprietorial body, made up of four directors, oversees the work of the school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision or run any off-site units.
- The Masjid as-Salafi mosque is in the same building as the school.
- The school aims to deliver 'a broad, balanced and Islamically relevant curriculum' to 'ensure children are inspired with a sense of virtue. To know and believe that sincerity, for the sake of Allah, honesty, respect, responsibility and courage is the only way for a good Muslim to be. The way to achieve this is by following the example of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), his companions, and the righteous of the generations that followed.'
- The previous full inspection of the school was carried out in December 2013.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils during lessons, at playtimes and lunchtimes and as they moved between lessons and the mosque. The headteacher and deputy headteacher accompanied the inspectors for some of these observations.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff, teachers with additional responsibilities, senior leaders and a member of the proprietorial body. A telephone call was made to the Schools Safeguarding Advisor for Birmingham.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and at playtimes and looked at their current workbooks in a range of subjects, photographs of events and some workbooks from last year.
- Inspectors analysed the responses from 14 staff questionnaires and the 15 responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View).
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. Inspectors also looked at evidence relating to attendance, pupils' achievement, safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Rachel Howie, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Humphries

Her Majesty's Inspector

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