

# Al-Noor Primary School

Newton Industrial Estate, Eastern Avenue, Romford Essex RM6 5SD

## Inspection dates

7–9 December 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The inspirational headteacher, supported by a highly effective deputy headteacher and a committed staff team, has worked effectively to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Governance is excellent. Since the school's emergency inspection in September 2015, trustees have shown impressive resolve and worked very effectively to support and challenge the school's leaders. However, leaders and trustees do not analyse pupils' progress in all subjects with the same level of rigour as they do in English and mathematics.
- Safeguarding is effective. A culture of 'no concern is too small' ensures that pupils are kept safe. The school's work on combatting radicalisation and extremism, in line with the government's 'Prevent' duty, is very strong.
- Effective teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in all subjects, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils' reading skills are especially well developed. However, while leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils, some of the most able pupils say that they need to be challenged further.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' understanding of other faiths, cultures and lifestyles is very well developed. Because of strong leadership and teaching, pupils have a very strong understanding of British values, equality and the fundamental importance of respecting others, regardless of difference.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Bullying and incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. Pupils have excellent manners, work very well with each other and are proud of their learning and school. However, attendance needs to improve further as a few too many pupils are persistently absent.
- The school's early years provision is good. It is well led by an effective leader. The provision ensures that children are motivated, interested and well prepared for the next step in their education. All children make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Parents and staff are consistently and overwhelmingly positive about the school.

### 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 leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - all leaders, including trustees, rigorously analyse pupils' progress in all subjects.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - the most able pupils are appropriately and consistently challenged.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - improving attendance, especially by reducing the level of persistent absence.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The school's leadership team, led by a passionate and motivational headteacher and supported by very effective trustees, share a clear vision. They role model high expectations and are ambitious for all pupils, successfully creating a culture of mutual respect and tolerance. Some recent challenges have been faced, including higher than average staff turnover and a move into temporary premises. Despite this, leaders have worked tirelessly and skilfully to ensure that all the independent school standards are met and that these changes have not affected the quality of provision.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is excellent because it is planned cohesively as a 'thread' through the entire curriculum, which is broad and balanced. Every possible opportunity is taken to develop pupils' understanding of respect, tolerance and equality through the effectively timetabled curriculum, which also includes Islamic and Quran studies and Arabic. Pupils' understanding of other faiths, cultures and lifestyles is very well developed. The school's work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain is effective. The school runs an active, democratically elected school council and pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities, trips and experiences such as cultural heritage week, which inspectors observed in action.
- Parents are exceptionally positive about their children's school. Comments from parents who spoke to inspectors directly and contributed to Ofsted's online questionnaire are almost universally effusive in their praise. Inspectors found all members of staff to be equally positive and enthusiastic about the school.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance, which is reflected in the school's self-evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders' and trustees' monitoring of the quality of teaching is strong. A clear programme of visits to classrooms, checks on planning, workbooks and progress information is effective in monitoring quality. It is effectively linked to the school's system for managing staff performance. However, while leaders and trustees monitor and can show that pupils make good progress in all subjects, they acknowledge the need to track and review pupils' progress as closely as they do in English and mathematics.

### Governance

- Governance provides excellent support and challenge to the school. Trustees of the Al-Noor Foundation are absolutely committed to the school's ongoing improvement.
- Ofsted's emergency inspection in September 2015 was a useful learning experience for trustees. In response, work to rapidly remedy the identified failures was confirmed as successful in a progress monitoring inspection in April 2016. A cycle of 'governor monitoring' is in place and is wide-ranging and challenging in its approach. For example, trustees undertake 'spot checks' on the complaints log, the admission register and the single central register of vetting checks on staff. They also undertake curriculum and SMSC development audits and closely monitor the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Trustees effectively oversee the school's system for checking staff performance. They are closely involved in ensuring that decisions about salary increases for staff, including

that of the headteacher, are rooted in evidence that is securely based on pupils' outcomes.

- Trustees have worked closely with the headteacher to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently, providing additional funding and support wherever it is needed. This has been especially valuable during the school's recent relocation to temporary premises.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are the school's designated safeguarding leaders. They, and all staff, are appropriately trained and undertake their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. The school's systems for the management of visitors, safer recruitment of staff and referrals to external agencies are all effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy, available alongside all other required policies and information on the school's website, meets requirements and reflects the latest statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016). This guidance is followed by all staff, whose understanding is regularly checked by leaders.
- Leaders effectively protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism in line with the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff are suitably trained and are vigilant, confident and competent. Effective risk assessments and policies show that leaders have thought hard about their specific context.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in all year groups and subjects. Teachers' careful planning ensures that pupils are consistently engaged in learning. Pupils' reading, writing and skills in mathematics are very well developed. However, some of the most able pupils and their parents told inspectors they could be given even harder work, to challenge them further.
- Pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values and the development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is exceptionally well integrated at every possible opportunity. Lessons observed during cultural heritage week included pupils crafting impressive poems about being British, and what this means to them.
- Pupils' positive working relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants enable them to seek advice and support when it is needed. However, a very few new teaching assistants need further professional development to more effectively support learning.
- Pupils receive regular written and oral feedback on how well they are doing, in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils told inspectors that they find this useful. However, leaders' scrutiny of pupils' workbooks show that while teachers are following this policy consistently in English and mathematics, it is occasionally less consistent in other subjects. This is being suitably addressed with further training and support.
- Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour in class is highly effective. Pupils understand the school's expectations, are always ready to learn and enjoy being rewarded with class points, rewards and assembly awards.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they are happy and feel safe in their school, and inspectors agree that pupils are kept safe from harm. All pupils spoken to could identify members of staff they trusted and would go to if upset or concerned. Pupils have very good knowledge about keeping themselves safe, including online.
- While pupils' punctuality is excellent, attendance is a little below the national figures. Of greatest concern is persistent absence, which is too high. Leaders and trustees demonstrated their work to date on improving the situation, and their plans to work even more closely with the local authority's education welfare service to effectively support and challenge parents.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are respectful, polite and cooperative. They love learning, are taught good manners from their time in the early years and are an absolute pleasure to talk to.
- Pupils' understanding of respect is ingrained in their understanding of the world around them. They are taught sensitively about differences and are being very well prepared for secondary school and for life in modern Britain.
- Incidents of bullying and misbehaviour are very rare. Where they do occur, they are well dealt with and any trends are considered by leaders, and appropriate action is taken.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make consistently strong progress across subjects and year groups. Their work in a wide range of subjects, especially English and mathematics, indicates good development of knowledge, understanding and skills as a result of effective teaching. Pupils are consequently well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school chooses to enter pupils for the externally assessed national tests in Year 6 each year. In last year's reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics tests, pupils performed above the national average. In writing, they performed in line with the national average and the school knows that a greater emphasis on handwriting will improve pupils' skills further.
- Leaders' systems to analyse the progress of different groups, including for the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, show that no specific group makes better or worse progress.
- Pupils learn to read with fluency and with great enthusiasm from a young age. The systematic teaching of phonics is good. As a result, pupils are highly successful when they complete the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, with a range of abilities, were eager to read to inspectors and talk about their reading choices and favourite authors.
- Pupils benefit from a broad range of learning. They achieve well in a range of subjects

including science, computing, Arabic, Islamic studies, humanities, the arts, physical education and personal, social, health and economic education. However, while pupils make good progress in all these subjects, leaders need to review this as closely as they do in English and mathematics.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years provision, which comprises a Reception class only, is good. Staff benefit from the strong leadership of the experienced early years leader. As most children have attended local nurseries, and some join the school directly from their homes, the school's system for identifying children's starting points is rightly very thorough. However, the school is in the process of strengthening its external moderation of these starting points to ensure their reliability.
- Children make good progress in Reception. Every child achieved a 'good level of development' last year and children typically develop good skills, knowledge and understanding to be ready for Year 1. This is as a result of good planning, a range of appropriate activities and a good level of challenge for all children, including the most able. High expectations and detailed knowledge of children's next steps ensures that activities are tailored to promote good progress.
- Adults skilfully listen to, question and observe children, carefully judging when to intervene to provide support or challenge. Children's progress is well recorded, tracked and reviewed using an online portfolio system that is shared with parents.
- Children's behaviour, engagement and confidence in the Reception class indicates they feel happy and safe. Children cooperate well, for example working together during role-play activity to 'fix the house' or to tidy up the classroom.
- The early years leader and her colleagues work closely with the local authority to access support and guidance. The school welcomes advice and is always seeking to improve its practice. To this end, the early years leader regularly undertakes visits to other settings to see and share a range of good practice.
- The school meets the independent school standards specific to the early years.

## School details

Unique reference number	134244
DfE registration number	317/6076
Inspection number	10012977

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al-Noor Foundation
Chair	Daud Juneja
Headteacher	Someera Butt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,300
Telephone number	020 8597 7576
Website	<a href="http://www.al-noor.co.uk">www.al-noor.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@al-noorprimary.co.uk">office@al-noorprimary.co.uk</a>

## Information about this school

- Al-Noor Primary School is an independent Islamic school located in the London borough of Redbridge near Romford, Essex.
- The school was established in 2002 and is owned by the Al-Noor Foundation.
- The school's last inspection was a material change inspection in September 2016, commissioned to check the suitability of the new premises. All the relevant independent school standards were judged to be met.
- The school's last full inspection undertaken by Ofsted was in July 2007. The school was also inspected in July 2010 and July 2013 by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate. All three inspections judged the school as providing a good quality of education.
- The school's website meets all the requirements of the independent school standards.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- Inspectors jointly observed a wide range of teaching and learning with the school's leaders throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors also heard pupils read, met with a selection of pupils, including the most able, and spoke with pupils and staff informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors jointly scrutinised, with the school's leaders, a wide range of pupils' workbooks and the school's own information about pupils' progress.
- The inspection took account of 54 contributions to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and inspectors met with five parents.
- Inspectors had meetings with a range of staff including early years and subject leaders, members of the senior leadership team and trustees. The inspection also considered 23 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with the local authority's designated officer (LADO). He also met with a local councillor and a consultant headteacher, who have both supported the school over recent years.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including policies, logs, evidence of staff training and other information related to safeguarding and health and safety. The lead inspector also toured the premises and considered additional information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Patricia MacLachlan

Ofsted Inspector

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