

# Al-Furqan Primary School

Inspection Report

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**Local authority:** Birmingham Council  
**Inspected under the auspices of:** AMS UK  
**Inspection dates:** 8 June 2015  
**Lead inspector:** Mrs Hasina Varachia

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school:</b>	Primary
<b>School category:</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4 -11
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll:</b>	530
<b>Appropriate authority:</b>	Interim Executive Board
<b>Chair:</b>	Mrs Sylvia Fry
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mr Andrew Moore-stow
<b>Date of previous school inspection:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2010
<b>Address:</b>	Reddings Lane Tyseley, Birmingham, B11 3EY
<b>Telephone number:</b>	0121 777 2222
<b>Email address:</b>	enquiries@al-furqan-pri.bham.sch.uk
<b>School website:</b>	<a href="http://www.al-furqan-pri.bham.sch.uk/">http://www.al-furqan-pri.bham.sch.uk/</a>

# Introduction

## Inspection team

Lead Inspector : Mrs Hasina Varachia  
Team Inspectors: Mr. Yusuf Seedat  
Mr. Imran Mogra

This inspection was carried out by three inspectors. The inspection was observed by two members of the Department for Education. They visited ten lessons or parts of lessons including observing registration, lunchtimes and the collective prayers session. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff, parents and groups of children. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including children's written work, planning, the Religious Education and IQA (Islamic studies, Qur'anic studies and Arabic) curriculum, the school's self-evaluation documents and the school's RE development plan. In accordance with the protocol that exists between DFE and AMS UK (Section 48), the lead inspector looked at the school's recent Ofsted inspection report, which took place in February 2014.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- The Religious Education (RE) curriculum
- The progress pupils make in religious education
- The quality of teaching in religious education
- Leadership and management for religious education
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including collective worship.

## Information about the school

Al-Furqan is a VA maintained Islamic primary school in Birmingham. The school became part of the Voluntary Aided (VA) sector in 1998. The school is very popular in the city for its tarbiyah ethos (spiritual and moral development) of pupils. Therefore, the school takes Muslim pupils from almost all localities and from all backgrounds. The whole school is a multi-cultural and multi-faith cohesive community. The school was last inspected for Section 48 in 2010. The school aims to ensure the highest educational achievement of which each pupil is capable, by providing a broad and balanced education within the framework of the National Curriculum and Islamic values, regardless of racial origin, gender or academic ability. There are 530 pupils on roll.

## Inspection judgments

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	2
<b>The achievement of pupils in their religious education.</b>	2
<b>The quality of teaching and learning.</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of religious Education, including the role of the school's governing body in RE.</b>	2
<b>The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs.</b>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the daily act of collective worship.</b>	1

### **Overall effectiveness: the quality of religious education provided at Al-Furqan is good because:**

Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching which ensures that pupils' learning is good overall.

Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils show good attitudes to learning. Pupils are ambitious and have high expectations for themselves. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in the Annual IQA Presentation Evening. They are happy, mature, confident and caring individuals.

The Interim Headteacher, other leaders and governors, supported by the Al-Furqan Educational Trust (AFET) communicate high expectations and ambition. They have a very clear vision of how they want the school to be and are taking the right steps to achieve it.

The school has been subject to a number of monitoring visits since it went into special measures and these visits clearly show that pupils are making good progress and as a result are now a school identified as requiring improvement.

A clearly planned programme of SMSC provision and a strong Islamic *tarbiyah* (Development) programme results in very good behaviour and relationships both in lessons and during social time.

There have been a number of exclusions, although the school has worked hard with children and parents to ensure that individual needs are met. Poor behavior is effectively dealt with and pupils receive regular messages and reminders about the importance of good behaviour.

Pupils feel safe in school. Their excellent relationships means there is virtually no bullying in school.

Daily activities contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual development including *Salah*, (prayers), *dua* (supplications) and Hadith of the Week, (sayings of the Prophet Pbuḥ).

Attendance is 94.7% and in the bottom 20% of all schools.

The whole school curriculum is not yet linked with spiritual values and Islamic beliefs, although the IQA teachers have worked with curriculum teachers to enable some links to be made. More formal planning which ensures those links more effectively has been organised. The curriculum for Islamic studies, religious studies and *Qur'anic* studies fosters good moral development and a sense of identity. It benefits from specialist teaching.

Pupils are given many opportunities to develop as strong British citizens and demonstrate their respect and learning of Islam through practical experiences. These include assemblies, themed days and charity work. Examples of charity work includes pupils collecting hampers during Ramadhan for distribution to the local community and the Relief Day for Syria. These experiences enable them to show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of others.

British Values are effectively promoted throughout the curriculum, assemblies, displays and its' strong relationship with those of different faiths and cultures. The School has begun links with Bourneville Junior School and there are plans in place to work with their pupils. Interfaith Day provides pupils with opportunities to work with those of other faiths. Pupils are given opportunity to exercise democracy by taking part in school's council election. Pupil voice is strong. They have been part of the tendering process for new school meals and also are given many opportunities to apply for the positions of leadership offered by the learning mentor in the school.

Relationships with parents are good overall. The head teacher's surgery has allowed parents the opportunity to share their concerns on a regular basis and as a result has prevented the escalation of issues. Of the parents who responded, parents are confident in the schools' processes and feel they are kept informed on developments at the school and their suggestions are carefully considered. Some feel however, that more could be done to engage with parents and stronger links are needed.

The quality of collective worship is very good; pupils participate with confidence, respect and sincerity.

**Achievement of pupils at the school in their religious education is good because:**

Teaching results in rapid progress being made in *Qur'an* reading throughout the school. Pupils learn their *duas*, (supplications) well and are able to read them in context.

In *Qur'anic* studies, progress is carefully tracked and intervention applied effectively when required. Effective CPD ensures that teachers' assessment are accurate and pupils make excellent progress as a result. In RE, a more consistent tracking system is needed to ensure progress over time is measured more effectively.

Pupils' understanding is checked in lessons to make sure they understand all their work. Pupils are well known by their teachers and they receive specifically targeted support to ensure maximum learning when necessary. The most able would do better if suitably challenged.

Although in written work, pupils do not always receive detailed feedback so pupils do not know what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve.

Pupils demonstrate good knowledge in lessons and pupils' classwork books are also testimony to their growing knowledge.

Parents are pleased with the progress their children make.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- To put in place an improved tracking system which ensures the progress of all children is accurately measures pupils' progress over time.
- To ensure feedback informs pupils what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve.
- To ensure that the most able pupils are fully challenged.

## **The quality of teaching and assessment in the school is good because:**

In lessons where the teaching is good, the planning is effective. The learning process is sequenced methodically to ensure secure understanding of concepts and development of new skills. The teachers ask probing questions that make pupils apply effort and think through the answer. Resources are used very effectively to support learning.

When teaching is good, teaching and assessment methods are coupled with positive attitudes to learning and pupils reach high standards.

The RE curriculum is beginning to complement the rest of the curriculum well with teachers supporting class teachers with *Qur'anic ayahs, hadith* and Islamic teachings on various topics. Pupils learn well securely about aspects of other religions.

A variety of planned experiences outside the classroom ensure children enjoy their learning. Examples include, Shakespeare Week, Kindness Week, Anti-Bullying Week, Remembrance Day and work with Kaos Arts. Visiting authors help inspire children's writing. Pupils are also producing their own CD.

In lessons, it is clear that teachers care deeply about ensuring that pupils are successful. Pupils are enthused and motivated due to the teachers' strong specialist knowledge. Pupils' behaviour is very good.

Although curriculum content coverage is detailed and pupils' presentation skills are excellent, pupils do not receive focused feedback, so do not know why they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils would make better progress if work was differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils especially the more able. Pupils also would benefit from a greater variety of teaching activities which would engage and enthuse pupils.

Parents and carers meet staff regularly to share information about pupils' needs and achievements and to review progress.

Pupils who are at risk of not achieving targets are monitored very closely and receive weekly support. Regular meetings between parents and middle and senior leaders are held frequently.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure work is pitched at the right level of difficulty for all pupils.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management of Religious Education is good because:**

Senior leaders consist of highly qualified, well informed and ambitious individuals on the senior leadership team. The leaders supported by the Interim Executive Board (IEB) have brought about improvements in maintaining a good quality of provision. They have a clear vision based on ensuring the best possible academic and personal experiences and outcomes for all pupils. Senior leaders articulate this vision clearly. The focus on developing the skills of teachers ensures that all pupils make good progress and excellent progress in their learning of *Qur'an*.

The IEB is committed to maintaining the school's Islamic ethos by regular reviews and evaluation, led by the AFET. IQA staff have attend workshops delivered by the AFET.

Governance is effective and led well. Governors share the same aims and ambition as leaders and work in full partnership to achieve them.

The Islamic Ethos Annual Self- Evaluation shows clearly that pupils' SMSC development is of exceedingly high order.

The head of RE drives improvement and ensures that pupils' learning is coherent, challenging and interesting. The senior leaders know the school well and have identified the main priorities for improvement.

The curriculum is planned well and regularly reviewed. Many varied and interesting activities are provided for pupils which extend and enrich their experiences. These include a wide range of extra- curricular activities including calligraphy club and *nasheed* (Islamic music) club.

The school has monitoring systems in place which include book monitoring, learning walks and observations and coupled with the support from the AFET, these have contributed to the overall improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

Regular CPD is provided to support staff in developing spirituality and contributing to shaping the Islamic ethos of the school. Recently, staff have attended a training day on strengthening the Islamic thread in other subjects. New staff are very well supported through a thorough induction programme, which includes an Islamic induction session. Various Workshops have been arranged by the AFET to develop IQA knowledge and skills.

The senior management team has generally a good relationship with parents. There is a headteachers' surgery every two weeks, parents are invited to attend IQA workshops and regular communication through newsletters ensures parents are kept well informed. Parents meetings take place three times a year. Some parents feel they would like to be more involved in the school.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- To increase parental engagement and develop positive relationships with all parents.
- To increase the involvement of parents in the education of their children.
- To better co-ordinate the RE provision with IQA aspects.
- To refine roles and responsibilities of the Senior Management Team to ensure an effective system of monitoring, evaluation and review is in place.

## **The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs is good because:**

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum for its' RE provision. At key stage 1 and 2, pupils are taught RE in line with the SACRE syllabus for Birmingham. In Islamic studies, pupils follow the agreed syllabus of the Ibrahimi Board of Education (IBE). The school appropriately provides pupils with knowledge and understanding of *'aqaaid* (belief), *aklaaq* (creed), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Seerah* (life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)), *tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur'an) and history and as well as learning about other religions.

Visits to places of worship enrich provision and tolerance of and respect for others' beliefs are actively promoted through interaction with those of other faiths. Examples include a recent year 5 visit to the local temple. Reception children have also visited the local mosque and year 3 pupils the local Church. During the inspection, in discussion with members from the School council, pupils were clearly able to identify different beliefs which exist amongst religions demonstrating secure and mature understanding.

The curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to develop further. The range of practical experiences offered provide testimony to this. Examples include, *Zohar* prayer (midday prayers) which are conducted in congregation for boys and girls from Key stage 2. All these pupils partake in *Jummah*, (Friday prayers) and the school offers pupils suitable facilities. During prayer times, pupils partake respectively in *dua* (supplication to Allah.) Pupils also are given the opportunity to lead *salah* themselves and take it in turns to call the *adhaan* (call to prayer).

Pupils show very keen interest and enjoy their prayer session.

Whole school assemblies are led by pupils and this demonstrates their growing leadership skills and the opportunity to recite *surahs*, chapters from the Qur'an to gain spiritual reflection. Pupils also partake in performing *nasheeds*, Islamic songs.

The school day and all lessons begin respectfully with *dua* or a Qur'an chapter of the week. Each week, staff and pupils are presented with a Hadith of the Week. Examples include, *'The best amongst you is the one with the best manners.'* This provides an excellent opportunity to foster a sense of Islamic identity.

Pupils learn well about the British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and cultures.

**The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because:**

The quality of the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because the Islamic ethos permeates effectively throughout the school. Pupils also learn about other faiths and cultures by visiting places of worship and meeting people of other faiths. It is promoted through the IQA and RE curriculum, assemblies and other programmes. The school works hard to promote British Values. During discussions, pupils shared secure understanding of different faith and differences within faith.

The spiritual development of pupils is developed practically through daily *Zohar* (midday prayers), recitation of the Qur'an and reading of daily *duas* (supplications). Some of these are led by pupils to develop leadership skills, self-esteem and self-worth. During the inspection, pupils were observed creating their own CD.

The moral development of pupils is well catered for by giving pupils opportunities across the curriculum to explore and develop moral concepts and values, such as right and wrong, justice, personal rights and responsibilities. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are courteous and caring towards each other in lessons and around the school.

Pupils are given many opportunities to develop as strong citizens and demonstrate their respect and learning through practical experiences. These range from distributing hampers to the needy, working with the elderly and supporting people in Syria. These experiences enable them to show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively as British Muslims to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely.

**Views of parents and carers:**

- Almost all parents are supportive of the school.
- Some parents would like to be more involved in the life of the school.
- Some parents would welcome more Islamic activities, visits and special events.
- Parent would welcome more opportunities for pupils to learn at home.

## Glossary

What inspection judgments mean

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgment</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. AMS UK inspectors will make further visits until it improves.