



Al-Furqan Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131465
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 293762
Inspection dates 28–29 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Lilly

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Reddings Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Tyseley
Age range of pupils	4–11		Birmingham B11 3EY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7772222
Number on roll (school)	252	Fax number	0121 7772277
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ahmed
		Headteacher	Z Hussain
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving a community with considerable social and economic deprivation. All pupils are of British Asian heritage and Muslim, and most speak English alongside the language they speak at home. Originally formed as an independent school, the school is now an Islamic maintained school. Since the last inspection it has relocated to its present site. Pupils join the school with lower attainment than average. The headship is a job share between the headteacher who founded the school and the previous deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Al-Furqan is a good school and pupils achieve well. Since the last inspection, the attainment of children when they join Reception has declined steadily. Despite this decline, pupils still attain at least average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Children make good progress in Reception and this good progress continues throughout the school. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 are average. Some more able pupils in mathematics, however, do not always reach their potential because they have yet to acquire the higher-level skills in English that they need when thinking about mathematics.

The headteachers' outstanding leadership creates a team that is certain of its values and vision, as well as a very positive ethos for learning. This is an ambitious school, clear as to what the school does well and determined to find ways of providing 'only the best for the children'. Self-evaluation is rigorous and a key reason why standards have remained satisfactory, despite children joining Reception with progressively lower attainment. Judgements, however, are overly self-critical, grading good performance as only satisfactory. Strong governance, shared and effective leadership and good management at all levels create a caring, orderly and purposeful school.

Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and know how to be healthy. They use every opportunity to play their part in the life of the school and view moving on to secondary school with warranted confidence. Their attendance and behaviour are good, and relationships warm and perceptive. They are keen to produce their best. They find the work interesting because the good curriculum is broad and highly relevant to their needs, offering rich and varied experiences beyond the classroom. These activities broaden the pupils' knowledge and understanding and make a considerable contribution to their personal development.

Teaching is good and guided by accurate assessment. Teachers use this information to fit the learning precisely to each pupil's needs. As a result, children learn well, thinking carefully about what they learn. Personal development and well-being are good and by the time pupils are in Year 6 they are mature and confident young people. Care and support are good, and effective guidance ensures pupils do well. As a child said, 'Teachers show you how to improve your work and tell you what you need to do to get a high grade.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the attainment of some more able pupils in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are average. Almost all pupils by Year 6 attain at least the national expectations of pupils aged 11 and overall about a third of pupils exceed these expectations. Results in the national tests have matched the national

averages for several years, including 2006, despite children joining Reception with progressively lower attainment each year. In 2006, however, the national test results in mathematics showed that even though all pupils attained the expected Level 4, a smaller number than the previous year attained the higher Level 5. This continued a declining trend in mathematics over recent years. This decline occurs because some of these more able pupils have not acquired the higher-level language skills in English they need in mathematics.

Currently, children join the Reception classes with well below average attainment in personal and emotional development, speaking and listening, knowledge and understanding of the world and understanding of number. Most children speak both English and the language they use at home, but the latter predominates. They settle quickly and learn rapidly. Even so, many do not meet the expected goals for learning by the end of Reception because their starting points are low. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and by the end of Year 2 attain average standards in national tests although the range is wide. The good progress continues in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, almost all pupils attain at least the levels expected and this shows outstanding progress by the least able.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good and by Year 6 pupils are mature and independent young people. This comes from the teachers' high expectations and deep values that the pupils make their own. Attendance and behaviour are good, and relationships warm and perceptive. Pupils feel safe and clearly know how to remain safe. They know what they need to do to be healthy and describe many ways to be so. They play their full part in what the school offers, for example, through the school council and joining in with all the school provides. They look forward to secondary education with confidence because they gain the skills they need. Pupils feel cared for and find the work interesting. They enjoy school greatly. A small minority of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Their behaviour improves because staff manage their behaviour well and provide them with the support they need. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and for spiritual development outstanding. Their good personal development is a strong reason why pupils learn so well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Throughout the school, teaching is usually good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers, teaching assistants and pupils work with a shared enjoyment in learning. Teachers make the objectives for lessons very clear and link these to activities that meet the needs of each level of ability well. Pupils know what

the teachers expect of them and work hard to meet these high expectations. Accurate assessment leads to learning that meets each pupil's needs precisely. Teachers manage lessons well and they bowl along with a sense of pacy achievement. At the end of lessons teachers and pupils agree what has been learned and feel that they have achieved a job well done. Reflecting the school's own evaluation of teaching, on rare occasions teaching is only satisfactory. In these cases learning slows but remains satisfactory. A strength of the teaching is that adults model the speaking of English very well and, as they are all bilingual, they also use the home language of the pupils to aid understanding. Consequently, pupils learn with greater speed as their speaking, listening and thinking skills in English increase.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and very relevant to the pupils' needs. It is planned very effectively as a whole with a strong focus on building the pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills across subjects. A carefully planned programme of 'focus weeks' allows the pupils to zoom in on a single topic and to study it in considerable depth. There is a wide and varied programme of activities and visits outside lessons. These make an outstanding contribution to the pupils' personal development as well as their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. These activities have high priority because self-evaluation shows that the latter is a key factor aiding the pupils' progress. However, some parents find the cost more than they can afford. The school realises this and is looking for ways to lower the cost and so increase the number of pupils that can benefit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff value every child and support them very effectively. There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have sensible behaviour improvement plans but these plans sometimes lack clear enough ways to support improvement. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and rigorous. Accurate tracking of pupils' progress, including their acquisition of English language skills, enables staff to set targets for pupils that are challenging and appropriate. Pupils understand their targets and make them their own. Good marking helps pupils to achieve their targets through very helpful comments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This grows from the headteachers' outstanding leadership. A strong governing body supports the vision and work of the school to the full. Managers at all levels lead and manage well and they create a purposeful environment. The checking of the school's work is rigorous and determined; as the

headteacher responsible for strategy said, 'It needs to be, because if it is not, something slips'. The school's self-evaluation is based upon reliable evidence, supports valid judgements and identifies clearly the key areas for improvement. For example, staff recognised the need for the development of speaking and listening skills to go across subjects and the need to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. However, the school's judgements on its performance are harsher than the evidence would support. The school works very productively with others to find ways to improve its effectiveness. Parents value the school highly and there is a strong partnership between home and school. Even so, there are some parents with whom the school finds it difficult to build positive relationships. The school had a small financial deficit recently, but this was for reasons beyond its control. Financial control is very rigorous and financial planning is both prudent and effective. The school has budgeted for a small surplus in this financial year. A strength is the way the school links improvement to relevant and timely staff development. This gives the school good capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your lovely school. We enjoyed our two days with you very much, especially talking to you and being with you in your lessons.

You go to a good school and you are very much a part of what makes it good. You told us you enjoy school very much. Your headteachers help everyone to see what makes a good school. The governors and your teachers are working very hard to make the school better and better each day. The school and your families work closely together to help you. You are working well in lessons, and make good progress. The school's curriculum is good, giving you many interesting and important things to learn that you will need for your future lives. You say you find what you learn interesting. This is because you have good teaching and you work hard. We think you are well cared for and get the help you need. You get on with others and care for them. You behave well and are very polite, and your attendance is very good. You are thoughtful and mature young people. You told us you liked, in particular, the many activities after school and how important you think the school council is.

To become an even better school, we have asked your teachers to:

- Provide some more able pupils with additional help to do better in mathematics.
- Make it clearer how good the school is by making more accurate judgements about its work.

You are playing an important part in making the school even better, so the best of luck.