

School inspection report

5 to 7 March 2024

Al-Furqaan Preparatory School

Drill Hall House

Bath Street

Dewsbury

WF13 2JR

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Al-Furqaan Prep School, in line with its stated aims, enables pupils to feel happy, safe and secure in an Islamic environment. Pupils feel nurtured in faith and valued as individuals.
2. Governors oversee the school effectively so that leaders have the skills and knowledge to deliver a suitable curriculum that promotes the wellbeing of pupils in a safe environment. Leaders supplement the curriculum with a programme of activities and visits to further enhance pupils' personal and social development.
3. The school's provision for early years reflects its focus on 'happy learners and high standards', based upon a culture of mutual respect. Staff use their expertise to create a stimulating and nurturing environment for children. An emphasis on identifying the distinctive characteristics and interests of every child fosters an environment where natural curiosity and creativity are encouraged and nurtured.
4. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress overall. Whilst activities are adapted to pupils' abilities, teaching resources are not always effectively deployed. In such cases, progress is not as strong.
5. The school has a suitable assessment framework and tracks pupils' progress. However, leaders do not always use data effectively to evaluate the support and interventions provided to inform future planning.
6. Pupils' behaviour reflects the faith values that leaders promote. Mutual respect is at the centre of the school's ethos, and the positive interactions between pupils and staff are built upon these shared values.
7. Pupils exhibit a clear sense of morality and accountability for their actions. They demonstrate respect for diversity within their school and the wider community and a secure understanding of British values.
8. Pupils feel safe and well supported in their school. Leaders carry out risk assessment procedures effectively and collaborate with external agencies to safeguard the pupils from potential harm. The school premises are appropriately maintained, and all staff and volunteers undergo the required checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.
9. Leaders' high expectations and encouragement of pupils to be the 'best they can be', and additional support for pupils' examination performance in their final year, ensure that pupils are well prepared for their transition to the local senior schools.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure teachers consistently use classroom resources effectively so that pupils make consistent progress
- ensure that assessment data is used more effectively to track pupil progress.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders have the skills and knowledge to promote the wellbeing of pupils. Governors oversee and evaluate the work of leaders so that their responsibilities are fulfilled effectively. The chair of governors works at the school bursar and manages the health and safety procedures. Governors are regular visitors to the school, observing lessons and meeting with staff and pupils. They evaluate the school's effectiveness against the stated aims and objectives by conducting regular parent surveys.
11. The assessment procedures implemented by senior leaders require a greater analysis to ensure that the effectiveness of any support provided is tracked effectively. Sufficient support resources are allocated to classrooms, but these need to be better utilised in teachers' planning and targeted where needed most.
12. The school provides well-planned pastoral care that reflects its Islamic values, building on the core value of mutual respect. Pupils have an embedded understanding of these, and use them to guide their daily interactions with their peers and adults.
13. The early years staff deliver a carefully planned curriculum in line with the national framework. Activities are tailored to support children's individual needs, assessed daily and communicated to parents at regular intervals through informal and formal meetings. Children benefit from a happy and engaging learning experience under the guidance of experienced and caring staff. They are supported to follow their interests and consequently children are engaged in their learning and build positive relationships based on mutual respect and kindness.
14. The information required is provided or available to parents and prospective parents through the school office and email correspondence. An electronic messaging system is used to keep parents updated on key information, pupil progress and new versions of policies as they are reviewed.
15. There is well-established liaison with the local agencies to support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and to address safeguarding concerns. There are accurate records of any contacts and the school provides detailed accounts of any expenditure of public money as required.
16. Risk is carefully considered and appropriately mitigated, be it the physical learning environment, educational visits or the specific needs of individual pupils. Staff have extensive training to identify the risks of extremism and are knowledgeable in identifying potential hazards to the pupils in their care.
17. Leaders respond to parents' concerns in accordance with their published policy, address matters quickly and record correspondence efficiently. Senior leaders monitor concerns, and an evaluative summary is provided to the governing body, along with any actions required and lessons learned.
18. Governors and leaders comply with the Equality Act to enhance access to the school and curriculum for all pupils, producing a suitable plan to enhance access.
19. Governors have completed the necessary training, often alongside the senior leadership team, to enable them to oversee the safe recruitment of staff and the school's safeguarding arrangements.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership management, and governance

20. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders ensure the curriculum is suitably planned, with a broad and balanced provision that is both age-appropriate and adapted to meet the differing abilities of the pupils. Standardised test results show that pupils make progress from their starting points in line with expectations. Pupils in their final year benefit from targeted additional support in preparation for their transition to senior school. Consequently, they feel well prepared for the next stage of their education.
22. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers generally use suitable strategies to engage pupils in their learning. In some cases, staff and resources are not always effectively deployed, and some pupils take longer to fully engage in the task. For example, lesson planning is too closely focused on the needs of a particular group of pupils, and consequently not as well matched to the needs of other groups within the class.
23. Both the curriculum and leaders' ethos emphasises respect and inclusion, effectively integrating these themes into whole-school initiatives. A project explored the concept of disability, where each class explored the impact of living with a specific disability. Children in Reception learned sign language to understand impaired hearing, whilst Year 1 focused on cerebral palsy, and Year 6 investigated diabetes and congenital heart disease.
24. Detailed planning in English lessons ensures that pupils' speaking, listening and literacy skills are well developed across the school. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote a police incident report using engaging vocabulary, whilst Year 3 pupils demonstrated their creativity when devising hyphenated words to describe a sword.
25. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to use and embed their prior learning and are resilient learners. The range of subjects taught enables pupils to develop their creative, linguistic and artistic skills. They are competent users of technology.
26. The school has a clear assessment framework to monitor pupils' progress. However, the subsequent interventions are not always evaluated effectively to inform future planning. Staff consistently apply the school's marking policy and provide pupils with clear targets and next steps. Consequently, pupils can evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses and take independent action to improve their understanding.
27. Teaching in the early years enables pupils to make good progress across the prime and specific areas of the curriculum. Children's fine and gross motor skills, communication and cooperative play develop well. Staff plan activities that appropriately stimulate and challenge the children in their care. Children are confident and articulate as they move between activities, and staff know when to support children's learning and when to observe and evaluate, allowing them to learn for themselves.
28. Pupils enjoy an adequate range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, which are further supplemented by a comprehensive programme of recreational activities, including enterprise challenge days, mock elections, and educational visits to places of local interest, such as the Royal Armouries, Mission Out and the magistrate's court, further enhancing their creative and physical development.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

29. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

30. Throughout the school, leaders promote a calm and respectful learning environment for the pupils. Their approach is evident in how pupils are kind and courteous to each other and listen attentively to their teachers. The school's ethos aligns closely with its faith values, which all members of the school community respect.
31. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is a priority for school leaders. Pupils sing prayers both in English and Arabic, in unison and with enjoyment. They demonstrate a knowledge of all the words of hymns, articles of faith, and the Ramadan calendar, and praying for peaceful reconciliation of conflict.
32. Teachers make effective use of a rewards system to help develop the self-esteem of their pupils. The pupils enjoy updating their merit scores and seeing their total increase, which also enhances their self-confidence. The online communication of individual pupils' merits to parents leads to praise at home, encouraging them to try their best at school.
33. There is a comprehensive physical education programme for all pupils. Leaders have enhanced provision by introducing a programme of off-site activities, including rafting and visits to activity centres, to develop pupils' sense of adventure and risk-taking.
34. The school implements a PSHE programme, which complements the morning prayer focus and challenges pupils to contribute to a calm, peaceful and happy environment in school and their local community. This supports their mental health, understanding different cultures, and promotes respect for diversity. Additionally, there is an appropriate relationship policy, enhancing pupils' understanding of positive relationships and respect for individual differences and diversity, highlighting the uniqueness of every person.
35. Leaders promote a high standard of behaviour through clear expectations and swift action in addressing any issues. They implement the school's behaviour policy consistently to maintain a positive and respectful environment. Staff are trained to recognise and address bullying effectively, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all pupils. Pupils know who to talk to if they are concerned and value the use of their class worry boxes and 'head's letterbox'. Pupils value the prompt interventions from staff to resolve any conflict and the use of restorative justice. This leads to pupils feeling supported and cared for by their teachers, and improved emotional wellbeing.
36. In the early years, teachers focus on promoting personal, emotional and physical development through a well-designed program of activities that encourages children to take the lead in their learning. Good behaviour is constantly praised, and children are encouraged to build healthy friendships by using thoughtful and caring language with each other. They behave in a considerate and respectful way towards those around them.
37. The premises and accommodation meet the appropriate standards, providing a safe physical environment for pupils, including suitable facilities for their medical needs. Health and safety arrangements are implemented effectively, regular fire drills take place, and pupils know how to exit the building safely. The school administers first aid promptly and competently, with trained staff available to meet the needs of pupils and adults.

38. A detailed supervision rota ensures that pupils are monitored throughout the school day. Well organised pick-up and drop-off arrangements seek to ensure a safe start and end to each pupil's day.
39. The school maintains accurate admission and attendance registers. Staff act promptly to investigate absentees, and records are stored safely. Staff also ensure that the local authority is informed of leavers and new entrants as appropriate.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 40. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

41. Leaders place great emphasis on instilling values of respect, kindness and consideration amongst pupils. The school promotes the ethical and economic understanding of pupils. In the early years, children talked about growing food as an economical alternative to buying from shops, whilst older pupils explained how fasting enables them to empathise with those living in poverty and help support their local community. Pupils are equipped with the skills and knowledge as responsible and hardworking citizens and are well prepared for life in British society and the opportunities that lie ahead for them.
42. The school's leaders promote respect for others, including characteristics related to sex, gender identity and faith throughout the curriculum. The school nurtures pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths, fostering an inclusive environment. This is evident through the pupils' commitment to social responsibility and respect for diversity, seen in their participation in charitable initiatives and community involvement. They support organisations such as the Downs Charity and engage with the local community by supplying provisions and collecting food for the local food bank.
43. The school actively promotes British values by incorporating them into different parts of the curriculum. For example, pupils elect school council members and visit the local magistrate's court to learn about laws and the justice system. They understand the significance of respecting laws and rules. Islamic values underpin pupils' attitudes. This is exemplified by how pupils gather at the end of the school day to prepare the hall and initiate communal prayers.
44. Leaders have implemented an Enterprise Week initiative, which helps pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 to develop their economic wellbeing. Pupils collaborate in teams to create a business plan, determine their budget, go shopping for materials, and produce a saleable product. Through this initiative, they learn how to make an impact in their local community. They donated the profits from their sales to a local blind school, which they identified during the whole school disability project.
45. Early years leaders support children's social development and foster a positive classroom environment. Activities encourage co-operation and mutual respect, such as during role play in the animal hospital, where children collectively cared for the sick animals, taking turns and agreeing on a rota to check on their progress. Children engage in discussions on moral values and foster an understanding of right and wrong by discussing stories like 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'.
46. Pupils are given leadership opportunities such as helping to make breakfast for the entire school, participating in the school council, and taking on practical responsibilities to help organise their classrooms and playground, such as monitoring the register and formulating their own classroom rules. Consequently, they are developing their independence and organisational skills in preparation for the next stages of their education.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

- 47. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Safeguarding

48. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and the promotion of pupils' wellbeing are secure. Leaders are fully aware that incidents could happen in their school and therefore ensure that policies and procedures are in place to minimise risks. The safeguarding policy reflects the latest guidance and the governing body oversees its implementation with care.
49. Staff with designated lead responsibilities are appropriately trained and knowledgeable about their roles. Leaders refer concerns to children's services, the local authority designated officer and the police, where appropriate. Such referrals are instigated at the earliest opportunity and detailed records are kept. Nominated governors undertake a comprehensive audit of arrangements for safeguarding. They keep detailed records of their monitoring and report back to the full governing body.
50. All staff and governors receive annual safeguarding training and regular updates, including recent and updated guidance. There is a detailed induction programme for staff and volunteers that enables them to act effectively in accordance with school policy.
51. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and can articulate the necessary actions to deal with online safety and the risks such as extremism and children missing from education. They know how to identify and report signs of abuse, including child-on-child abuse. Low-level concerns are recorded and monitored. There are suitable measures in place to filter and monitor access to the internet.
52. Through a rigorous, safer recruitment process, the school ensures that all staff, volunteers and members of the governing body are checked in accordance with government guidance prior to undertaking their duties. Governors make sure an accurate single central record of checks is maintained.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Al-Furqaan Preparatory School
Department for Education number	382/6019
Address	Al-Furqaan Preparatory School Drill Hall House Bath Street Dewsbury WF13 2JR
Phone number	01924 453 661
Email address	info@alfurqaanschool.org
Proprietor	Al-Furqaan Governing Body
Chair	Mr Bilal Aswat
Headteacher	Ms Shaheda Ughratdar
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	150
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 December 2019

Information about the school

54. Al-Furqaan Preparatory School is a co-educational independent day school for pupils aged 2 to 11 in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. The school comprises two sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children aged 2 to 5 in Nursery and Reception classes, and the junior school for pupils aged from 5 to 11. A board of governors oversees the school.
55. There are 42 children in the early years.
56. The school has identified four pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. English is an additional language for six pupils.
58. The school aims to provide a high standard of education in an Islamic environment where children can feel happy, safe and secure. Its goal is to grow ambitious, resilient and successful children who can be proud of their identity and go on to play an integral part in making a positive contribution to today's society.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

5 to 7 March 2024

59. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

60. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work with leaders, staff and pupils
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

61. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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