



# Fitrah Southampton Islamic Primary School (Fitrah Sips Ltd.)

## Inspection report

This inspection was carried out under section 162 (A) of the Education Act 2002 as amended. Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) has been approved by the Secretary of State in the Department for Education (DfE) to undertake inspections in designated independent schools within membership of the Christian Schools Trust (CST) or the Association of Muslim Schools UK (AMSUK).

<b>DfE number:</b>	852/6011
<b>Association:</b>	AMSUK
<b>Date of inspection:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2014
<b>Lead Inspector:</b>	Mrs M Buckingham
<b>Team inspectors:</b>	Mrs M Kazmi Miss F Norcross
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	5-11 years
<b>Number on roll:</b>	47
<b>Full-time:</b>	19 boys 27 girls
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:</b>	None
<b>Proprietor:</b>	Trustees of Fitrah SIPS Ltd
<b>Head teacher:</b>	Mr Anas Al-Korj
<b>Address of school:</b>	The Culture Centre 55 Northumberland Road Southampton Hampshire SO14 0EJ
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## **The purpose and scope of the inspection**

The main purpose of the inspection is twofold. It is to advise the DfE whether the school continues to meet the requirements for registration, and to determine whether the school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of its association. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of The Bridge Schools Inspectorate on the Ofsted website.

## **Information about the school**

Fitrah Southampton Islamic Primary School is an independent school for boys and girls situated near Southampton city centre. Pupils are taught together in three mixed age and ability classes: Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6. Pupils are of diverse family heritage including Somali, Pakistani, Arabic, Afghani, Western European, Eastern European and Bengali.

The school's intentions include to 'inspire each pupil towards excellence in Islamic conduct ... foster and develop in each pupil...service to their faith and to society by being loyal in service of humanity... achieve their academic and personal potential' and foster 'equality of opportunity for British Muslim children enabling them to understand and become integrated into, rather than isolated from, British society of which they are a part'.

## **Evaluation of the school**

The school is achieving its intentions with improvements since the last inspection. All the regulations are met. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are very well cared for and the required policies are in place. Attention has been given to the latest safeguarding guidance. High priority has been given to staff training particularly over the past year. It is having an impact since the last inspection and since the changes in some regulations. The quality of teaching has improved; much is satisfactory with examples of good and outstanding practice. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall and it is good in literacy and numeracy.

There have been unsettled times for the school since the last inspection. Of the current numbers on roll, nearly half of the pupils joined the school this term in September 2014. The head teacher returned to his post at the beginning of this term after a period away. Nearly half of the teaching staff and two-thirds of support staff have been employed since January 2014. This has posed challenges for the school in terms of curriculum planning, teaching and pupils' learning. These have been met with determination and energy on the part of the head teacher to raise standards. Teachers and governors are working to keep the curriculum and the school's policies under review. The head teacher has updated the school development plan with a more recent outline of relevant areas for future development.

## **Quality of education provided**

The curriculum is satisfactory with good features. The Islamic curriculum is a strong feature and makes a positive contribution to the school's intention to inspire pupils to

excellence in this area. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. These areas are well taught and resources are used well, including those on-line, for example for mathematics and reading. Pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is broad and balanced based largely on the National Curriculum so that all pupils have experience of the required areas of learning for independent schools: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative. In addition, the curriculum reflects well the school's Islamic vision for its pupils with the provision of Islamic studies (IS) and Qur'an and pupils enjoy *nasheeds* (Islamic songs). Arabic is taught as a modern foreign language and for understanding religious texts. All pupils also enjoy weekly physical education (PE) including swimming, usually in the 10 weeks of the spring term.

Teachers, two of whom are qualified, are working effectively together to plan the curriculum on a two-year cycle because of the mixed age classes and to show progression over the two key stages. They make appropriate use of National Curriculum and other commercial materials. A priority this year has been given to training staff. Class teachers have joined other schools to share good practice, for example to help assessment and planning to take note of the new primary curriculum. Apart from designated time for literacy, numeracy, PE, IS, Qur'an and Arabic lessons much of pupils' learning is carefully organised through topic. For example, science, history, geography, art, and design and technology topics are identified on rotation, termly and across the year. Opportunities for using information and communication technology (ICT) are often helpfully incorporated into topics. Pupils make connections in their knowledge. For example, in Years 5 and 6 the project on the Vikings enabled pupils to make helpful connections between this history topic and their work with design and technology and art with model making. In the pupils' books seen, literacy and numeracy are well covered but other subjects less so. There are adequate resources for learning including a suitable range of books and good provision of computers to support learning. Interactive white boards are also used effectively by teachers to support pupils' learning.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) topics are incorporated in weekly 'circle' time lessons, as well as in topics across the curriculum. The relevant curriculum materials take good account of the ethos of the school and make a positive contribution to achieving the school's intention of helping pupils understand their place in society. Assemblies too, reinforce positively this area of the curriculum.

Teaching overall is satisfactory with examples of good and outstanding practice. Pupils make commensurate progress in these lessons. In the best lessons teachers have good subject knowledge that they share enthusiastically. Relationships are positive, teaching engages pupils so that they enjoy their learning and they make good progress. The lesson planning helps pupils build effectively on their prior learning. The teachers' classroom management is good and lessons are conducted in a purposeful atmosphere. Praise and encouragement help to build pupils' self-confidence. A particular feature of the outstanding practice is the challenging questions from the teacher so that pupils have to think for themselves. Overall, lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives that help pupils to focus their learning. Assessment is a planned part of lessons with pupils often grouped by

ability and well-chosen resources help pupils learn and make progress. In satisfactory lessons, the abler pupils are not always sufficiently challenged or given work that extends their learning. This was a comment made at the last inspection. Occasionally, pupils are over-exuberant in their behaviour and it takes time to settle, them, for example when changing tasks.

Almost all of the pupils are bilingual, and some are trilingual speakers at home, but they are fluent in English. The school is mindful of the language needs of some newly arrived pupils who are at early stage of learning English. Assessment records show that these pupils make sound progress. In practice, those pupils identified with particular learning difficulties make steady progress because they are well supported through targeted planning by their individual class teachers. The provision for pupils who need support is not fully co-ordinated across the school and relies on individual teachers. There are many volunteer teaching assistants and some only recently started working in the school. They are encouraging to pupils but some are inexperienced in directing learning, so pupils' progress is lessened in the task.

Assessment of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection. It is good because the school now has a detailed tracking system and the data is carefully analysed and teachers are using this information to plan and set individual pupils' targets. Nearly half of the pupils were new to the school so baseline assessments were undertaken soon after pupils arrived. Together with on-going assessment of work, pupils' attainment is recorded using National Curriculum levels. The head teacher monitors carefully pupils' progress every half term. Targets are set for all pupils to be achieved by the end of the academic year and some pupils are on track to reach these and intervention is planned for those who need support. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and some provide helpful comments so pupils know how to improve their work. The end of Key Stage 2 standard assessment tests for the last academic year showed that all of the five pupils in the cohort reached expected levels or above in both English and mathematics, preparing them for the next stage of their education.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features in their spiritual development. Pupils have a good self-esteem and are increasingly encouraged to reflect on their Islamic characters. The daily recitation of the Qur'an helps pupils' understanding of the basic contents of *hadith* (saying of the prophet Muhammed) and *sunnah* (teachings and the life of the prophet Muhammed). Pupils perform respectfully their daily *salah* (prayers). A younger pupil confidently led the *salah* for the class. There is regular recitation of *duas* (supplications) and on Friday, the *Adhaan* (call to prayer) is played throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to explore, not only their own beliefs but to learn about, and respect those of other faiths. There are links with Christian schools. Recently, in an interfaith forum with a local non-denominational school, pupils shared ideas about how Arabic was taught to help with their reading of the Qur'an.

Pupils' moral development is good. Pupils understand the value of good conduct and that they must take responsibility for their actions with regard for others and all should be treated equally whatever their background or tradition. Pupils understand

right actions and which are wrong. Their behaviour is generally good although sometimes pupils take time to settle to their work. Pupils are respectful to visitors and to their teachers.

Pupils' social development is good. They collaborate well in teamwork, which plays a part in many lessons. In the gardening club, pupils have planted vegetables and fruits and they work well together to maintain a local community area having respect for the local neighbourhood. Indeed, a small group of pupils took part in a BBC children's television programme about this community garden. Local BBC radio has also reported on the school's community activities. Pupils learn about being a member of their local communities, the wider British society and communities across the world society through PSHCE and assembly topics. Pupils learn about British values such as democracy. They demonstrate this in the school council, which is made up of elected representatives from each class. They discuss matters raised by their classmates helping them to understand the democratic process of representation and contributing to the school community. In an assembly during the inspection a local councillor praised pupils for their contribution in helping to establish the community garden and recreational space that they use on a daily basis. It provided a good lesson in community action through the democratic process. Social events such as sharing a cake bake day with a Church of England school and charitable fundraising for local and overseas causes give the pupils a sense of service to others; part on the school's intent. Pupils know about British institutions, for example through regular guest speakers such as the Hampshire Police and local councillors.

Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, as does the teaching staff. They get on well together. Pupils are taught from a young age to appreciate the different cultures within their school and throughout the world. Visiting speakers have included representatives of other faiths such as Buddhists, Baha'is and Christians. Through the IS curriculum pupils are taught about the different elements of a culture and how it complies with the teachings of the *sunnah* 'Love thy neighbour'. Pupils show good respect for the diverse cultures within the school, within the local area and further afield. A variety of well-planned educational visits, for example to a school on the Isle of Wight, ensure that pupils gain an appreciation of the diversity of cultures and ethnicity in contemporary Britain.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Pupils are very well cared for and excellent attention is given to their well-being. Parents comment that their children feel safe and happy in school and are able to learn. In discussion with pupils they said that teachers listen, are approachable and that they felt safe in school. As one older pupil commented, 'We are all a big family and where we feel safe to wear our hijab'. There is a secure and encouraging atmosphere so that pupils enjoy their learning; they are happy at school and their attendance is good.

A range of detailed policies supporting health and safety, behaviour management and anti-bullying, have been devised and implemented to ensure that pupils are safe at all times. Fire safety is supported by regular checking and maintenance of fire appliances and fire drills are carried out regularly. Staff have a clear understanding

of their responsibilities and have undertaken a broad range of training to keep up to date. Safeguarding procedures are in place and take account of the latest guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and staff have had recent training. The members of staff with designated responsibility for child protection have undertaken recent training with Hampshire County Council. Similarly, all staff and the link governor for safeguarding have had recent child protection training devised by an online provider. The required checks relating to employment are carried out appropriately and account is taken of safer recruitment practices. Pupils know how to keep safe when using computers with a clear e-safety policy. Staff are well aware that they must not promote partisan political views and have received training about the school's policy in this area. In addition, the school has made staff aware of the government's 'Prevent' strategy regarding extremism and radicalisation through their links with the local constabulary.

Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and daily physical activity at lunch times and PE lessons provide good opportunities to encourage a healthy life style. The attendance and admissions registers are maintained well by the school and pupils' attendance is good; there is no unauthorised absence.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

The required checks are made on staff and proprietors. These are recorded appropriately on a single central register that meets requirements.

### **Premises of and accommodation at schools**

The school is based in a community centre building in a residential area near Southampton docks. The three classrooms are bright and spacious and provide a comfortable environment for learning. The pupils benefit from a small library area and good ICT provision. The school makes excellent use of the nearby community garden and play area during lunch times and for PE lessons. The local sports centre is used for football and the Quays Swimming & Diving Complex for the swimming lessons. This is an example of the school's active participation within the community. In the evenings the building is used for Qur'anic study not run by the school. The transition period is strictly adhered to and so this does not interfere or overlap with the times of the school.

### **Provision of information**

The provision of information for parents is clear and concise and meets all the regulations. The required information is presented on both the school website and in the prospectus. Parents receive both interim and end of year reports, which give a detailed account of their child's academic progress and a snapshot of their Islamic personality. The majority of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of what the school was doing for the education of their children. They report that they feel comfortable to approach members of staff should they require further information.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school has a complaints policy, which meets requirements and clearly explains the school's procedures and commitment to resolving concerns and complaints swiftly and amicably. There have been no formal complaints in the past year.

### **Compliance with the regulations**

The school meets all of the regulations for registration.

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Meeting the expectations of AMSUK**

The school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of AMSUK.

### **What the school could do to improve further**

As part of future development the school might wish to consider:

- improving further the quality of teaching in the satisfactory lessons
- ensuring that work planned for abler pupils is always challenging
- providing specific training for inexperienced teaching assistants, for example to support pupils who require help with their learning.