

Fitrah Sips

Independent school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Fitrah Southampton Islamic Primary School (Sips) is an independent Islamic primary school. It is owned by Fitrah Sips Trust Limited. Boys and girls are admitted from five to eleven years of age. The school is registered for 60 pupils. At the time of the inspection there were 47 full-time pupils on roll. The pupils are organised into two classes, one for the pupils in Years 1 and 2, the other for Years 3, 4 and 5. No pupils in Year 6 were on roll during the inspection. The school is situated in a building used as a cultural centre located in Southampton. The school's aims are: 'To motivate every student to achieve their academic potential; to inspire each student towards achieving excellence in Islamic conduct and social skills; to foster and develop, in every student, their service to Islam, their service to society by being loyal to Allah and translating this loyalty into services to humanity.'

The pupils are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. A very small minority are at an early stage of learning English. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. This is the school's first Ofsted inspection since it was registered and opened in September 2010.

Evaluation of the school

Fitrah Sips provides a satisfactory quality of education. The school meets its aims well. All the regulatory requirements for independent schools are met. Strengths of the school include the good behaviour of pupils, their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and good promotion of pupils' welfare health and safety. The curriculum and teaching and assessment are satisfactory, leading to the pupils' satisfactory progress. The school's safeguarding procedures are secure.

Quality of education

The satisfactory curriculum is broad and balanced. It is based on the National Curriculum and supported by commercial schemes. These schemes generally provide appropriate plans to support nearly all of the main subjects. However, they are not always adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Although a full music curriculum is not taught, in keeping with the school's religious status, Nasheed, Fender Drumming (Duff), Art of Azaan, and Quarnic Tajweed and Tarteel are taught daily. The school's curriculum policy is up to date and meets regulatory requirements. Personal, social and health education is taught well by ensuring pupils are provided with a weekly timetabled session as well as aspects being integrated into other subjects, for example, science and Islamic studies. The school's Islamic faith is reflected well throughout most lessons and specifically in the daily Islamic reminders. At the start of each day, pupils are provided with time to learn and reflect on the 'Haddith of the week'. This is in addition to dedicated religious education lessons. Staff and the governing body are rightly proud of the good provision for Arabic, Islamic studies and daily opportunities to study the Qur'an.

Pupils practise their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) each day. These subjects are often integrated. The physical constraints of the school building means that suitable arrangements have had to be made in order to teach physical education. For example an external provider offers pupils a broad range of facilities and support including a local leisure centre and swimming pool. In addition, the school ensures that pupils are able to be physically active outdoors at other times by very regularly accessing a nearby community garden and the sports ground of a youth centre. The school has enhanced the curriculum by recently encouraging a significant number of pupils to successfully pass British Sign Language level 1. The curriculum is appropriately extended through some visits. These have included trips to an aquarium and local places of interest. However, the school acknowledges that these opportunities are limited in their variety and frequency. Provision for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language generally matches their needs.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Teachers in both classes are generously supported by a number of regular volunteers. As a result, pupils of different ages and abilities within each class receive high levels of attention from this committed and caring team. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching is variable, ranging from outstanding to satisfactory, with most being satisfactory, giving pupils an inconsistent experience overall. The outstanding lessons were seen in the teaching of Arabic. Pupils were enthused and were very clear about their learning and worked collaboratively making very good progress. In the good lessons, pupils' different learning needs are met well. An example is the carefully adapted use of a commercial mathematics scheme enabling pupils of different abilities and ages to work on appropriately matched tasks. Teachers ask good questions and elicit productive and enthusiastic responses from the pupils because of the direct involvement in their learning. A variety of teaching strategies are used, the best of which include a range of practical resources. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good because the interesting activities engage and motivate them.

In lessons that are satisfactory, there is an imbalance of time with too much time being spent by the teacher talking and too little time for pupils to learn and reflect on

their tasks. Pupils generally cover the ground that is planned for them because of the additional adult support. However, activities are not precisely matched to all pupils' needs and so they do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is especially so for those pupils who are more able because the work is not challenging enough. During the inspection, a few pupils were observed having completed their tasks but they had limited opportunities for extension work.

Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils' books are marked regularly but there are few examples of teachers' written comments providing pupils with suggestions and ideas for their next steps in learning or on how to improve the work they have already done. Teachers do not use the information they have gained about pupils' prior attainment very regularly to plan future lessons. However, a good example of teachers employing assessment information well was seen in the teaching of Arabic, which is a strength of the school.

The school is currently using commercial schemes to assess where pupils are at the end of different topics and subjects. Staff have recently come to the conclusion that the schemes do not provide a sufficiently accurate picture of pupils' attainment or how much they have learned over time. The school has just begun to employ an approach informed by teacher-based observations and assessments, initially in literacy. However, the information gained is still too recent to give an accurate picture of pupils' overall progress. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' books during the inspection demonstrates that most pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The above-average attendance of nearly all pupils reflects their enjoyment and positive attitudes towards their school life. Pupils respond very well to their learning and the adults who work with them. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are confident, polite and courteous towards each other and adults. They work well both individually and in groups with different adults supporting them. Their steady progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT underpins a satisfactory preparation for their future economic well-being. Pupils have regular opportunities to meet local members of the community, including a former mayor of the city and officers of different ranks from the police force and fire services. As a result, the school has been effective in helping pupils to learn about public institutions in England and their local community. The school's religious ethos promotes a strong atmosphere of harmony and tolerance and most pupils are aware that there are people of different faiths and beliefs. As the school is still in its first year of existence, it recognises that its plans for visits to different places of worship and visits from representatives of different faiths have not yet been fully realised. Pupils have regular opportunities to make a positive contribution to school life and take on roles and responsibilities such as monitors and prayer buddies. Pupils have worked together to raise funds for charities and groups including 'Water Well' in Sri Lanka. Staff and the governing body are eager to take pupils' views into account and they are beginning to use information they have collected from pupils' views to

improve the school further. There are suitable plans for starting a school council in the near future.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for promoting pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Staff know and care about all the pupils. Relationships with parents and carers are strong, thoughtful and productive. This is demonstrated by the school's appointment of a family liaison officer, who has an active role in encouraging families to engage with the school and to support their children with their learning.

Pupils' health and safety are treated seriously by all staff and the governing body. Safeguarding training has been delivered to all staff and the two designated members of staff for safeguarding are trained to meet the regulatory requirements for child protection. Volunteers have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau and their names entered in the properly constituted single central register. The systems for risk assessments within the school and for visits meet the regulatory requirements. Those pupils who spoke to inspectors and returned questionnaires stated that bullying is rare and that when it occurs, it is dealt with effectively by staff. The low numbers of incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner. Exclusions are non-existent. Pupils feel safe and there are good opportunities through the curriculum to learn how to live healthy lifestyles.

Pupils' behaviour, both positive and inappropriate, are conscientiously recorded. A good example of this is the 'Golden Book' which celebrates individual pupils' achievements. This is balanced well by the equally carefully recorded yet small number of incidents of challenging and unacceptable behaviour. These incidents are consistently followed up with parents and carers in a sensitive manner. Health and safety policies and procedures meet the regulatory requirements and staff are eager to further develop these to ensure an even more secure approach is taken in this area. The school's development plan meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has effectively carried out the required checks on all staff prior to their appointment. All these checks are recorded correctly in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and accommodation meet all of the regulatory requirements, supporting pupils' safety and the provision for learning. The decorative state of the building is sound. Classrooms are well maintained and meet the needs of the different ages and numbers of pupils on roll. The school has made suitable arrangements to ensure pupils are able to make very regular use of a local

community garden for playtimes and games and to use local facilities for indoor physical education lessons.

Provision of information

The school provides clear, accurate and up-to-date formal and informal information for current and prospective parents and carers. There is a clear and helpful prospectus. The vast majority of the questionnaires returned were very positive, indicating that the parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Secure plans are in place for a website in the very near future.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure meets the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Develop a more accurate and consistent approach to assessment by:
 - using assessment information about pupils' prior attainment more regularly to plan activities which match the learning needs of all pupils, but especially those of the more able
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' work provides them with feedback about their next steps of learning and how to improve their work.

- Provide a wider range of off-site learning activities to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

Inspection judgments

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Muslim Primary		
Date school opened	September 2010		
Age range of pupils	5–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 23	Girls: 24	Total: 47
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,000		
Address of school	55 Northumberland Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO14 0EJ		
Telephone number	023 8000 6000		
Email address	office@fitrasips.com		
Headteacher	Anas Al-korj		
Proprietor	Anas Al-korj		