

Inspection of Abu Bakr Al-Ihsaan Academy

154–160 Wednesbury Road, Palfrey, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 4JJ

Inspection dates:

28 to 30 January 2025

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

The proprietor has not ensured that all pupils are safe at school. This is because parts of the school's premises are unsafe and pose a risk of injury to pupils. Furthermore, there is currently no capacity in the leadership of the school. As a result, the school is regularly left without any senior leaders on site for significant amounts of time during a school day.

Staff are ambitious and aspirational for their pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Adults are committed to helping pupils to do their best. Meaningful professional relationships help to fulfil these aims.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are welcoming, friendly and work hard. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending. Staff foster a sense of belonging, resulting in pupils and adults speaking of the school as a 'family'.

Pupils learn about values such as tolerance, respect and diversity. They understand and respect people from different backgrounds and faith. Pupils say, 'we are all on our own journey, without judgment'. Pupils benefit from effective careers advice to help them in making decisions about their future.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school is registered as one mixed school from age four to 16, but it is operating a separate school for girls aged 11 to 16 on the same site. As the school does not allow boys to be admitted to the 11 to 16 provision, it is acting in breach of its registration and is separating pupils by sex, which amounts to unlawful discrimination. This had been explained to the proprietor during two previous inspections. However, at the time of this inspection, this practice continued and the proprietor had not acted to rectify the situation.

Since the previous monitoring inspection in May 2024, around half of the staff, including senior leaders, have left the school, resulting in significant staff shortages, especially in the secondary phase of the school. This is where pupils in the past have achieved very strong outcomes. However, the proprietor has not employed new staff. As a result, in several year groups, especially in key stage 3 and 4, staff do not have the necessary subject or pedagogical knowledge needed to construct or deliver a curriculum well. Additionally, learning is not presented in a well-sequenced way, and teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge well enough. Consequently, staff do not adapt their teaching sufficiently and pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Reading is a priority. Pupils read widely and often and enjoy reading across the curriculum. Pupils receive the help they need to become fluent readers. Staff spot pupils who may need extra help and support them to improve. As a result, most pupils read at a level appropriate for their age.

The school works well to identify and support anyone who needs additional help. Staff get to know pupils very quickly and share information with others on how best to support pupils with SEND, including in lessons. This work is increasingly effective, and pupils with SEND overall do well.

Children in Reception get off to a strong start. Staff quickly help them to settle in and forge strong relationships. Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum that helps children to gain the knowledge and skills they need to begin reading, writing and counting. Children learn how to behave and share their toys with one another. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Attendance is high. The school understands the barriers some pupils have to attending frequently. Leaders work very well with parents and carers to ensure that these barriers are overcome. Strong relationships between families and the school further support pupils' strong behaviour. All staff know what is expected and pupils routinely meet these high expectations.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is strong. This work includes lessons, trips and activities such as 'well-being Wednesdays', which pupils keenly take part in. Pupils receive effective bespoke careers advice and guidance. They learn about fundamental British values and healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. The school has ensured that the statutory guidance on relationships sex and health education is met.

The proprietor has not set a clear strategy for holding themselves and staff to account. They have not ensured that there is adequate financial support and have failed to meet their statutory obligations to ensure the health and safety of pupils. They have not identified the school's weaknesses or ensured adequate leadership and staff levels. The proprietor has not made sure that the school meets all of the independent school standards in a systematic and consistent way. This is because of a lack of the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise to do so. The school does not meet the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

All staff speak highly of the school. They are proud to work at this school and think that leaders take their workload into account appropriately.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The proprietor has not ensured that the school site is safe for all pupils. Some areas of the premises, such as some toilets, are unsuitable and pose a risk to pupils' health and safety. Other areas pose a risk of injury due to a lack of maintenance. For example, inspectors found exposed long nails and screws sticking out of walls that could pose a risk to children. The school has failed to comply with statutory fire regulations. There has never been an appropriate fire risk assessment carried out on the school premises by someone with adequate expertise and knowledge. Due to

financial shortages, there are times when the heating does not work in all areas of the school, including in classrooms and toilets.

The school completes all required checks on anyone working at the school and keeps accurate records. Leaders are knowledgeable about safeguarding and ensure that pupils and their families receive the help and support they may need. Staff know how to report any concerns and receive appropriate safeguarding training.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The proprietor has not ensured that pupils are safe. The poorly maintained premises pose a risk of injury, and fire regulations have not been met. This puts pupils at risk of harm. The proprietor should ensure that the premises are suitable, safe and free from risk of harm.
- The school continues to operate outside of its registration agreement by not admitting boys into its 11 to 16 provision. This amounts to unlawful discrimination by sex. The proprietor should ensure that the school operates within its registration agreement.
- The proprietor has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met in a systematic and consistent way. As a result, standards at the school are declining and pupils are not safe. The proprietor should ensure that they have the required skills, knowledge and expertise to make sure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Significant staffing shortages, including at the leadership level of the school, are having a negative impact on pupils' learning and the daily operations of the school. The proprietor should ensure that there are adequate staff levels so that the school is effectively led and managed.
- Some staff do not have the pedagogical and subject-specific knowledge to construct and implement a fully effective curriculum. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that all staff have the required knowledge and expertise to fulfil their duties effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	132750
DfE registration number	335/6010
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10342032
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mohammad Luqman
Headteacher	Mohammed Ramzan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,800 to £5,160
Telephone number	01922 626829
Website	www.abubakrgirlschool.org
Email address	info@abubakrgirlschool.org
Date of previous inspection	8 to 10 March 2022

Information about this school

- The school is an Islamic day school, registered for up to 909 boys and girls aged four to 16. The school does not admit boys into their 11 to 16 provision. This means that they are acting in breach of their registration and are separating pupils by sex, which amounts to unlawful discrimination.
- The school does not meet all of the independent school standards, and safeguarding is ineffective.
- The school occupies numerous buildings behind a row of terraced houses. The premises include an office building, single-storey buildings, mobile classrooms, a main hall and an old factory building. Some parts of a single-storey building were recently destroyed in a fire. The school shares some parts of the premises at the address with the boys' school in the same trust.
- Since the previous monitoring inspection, around half of the staff have left the school, including senior leaders. The current executive headteacher is not actively involved in the running of the school. There currently is no employed senior leadership structure at the school.
- The school's last standard inspection was in March 2022, when it was judged to be good.
- The school has had two monitoring inspections since then, one in November 2023 and one in May 2024. During both, the school was found not to meet all of the independent school standards that were checked.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders, the executive headteacher and other staff. Inspectors met with the headteacher from the boys' school in the same trust. The lead inspector held a meeting with the proprietor and one trustee. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding and pastoral staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art, history, and personal, social and health education. Due to significant staff shortages, it was not possible to carry out some of the activities in each deep dive. Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils

about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered during the inspection.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at break and lunchtimes and spoke to pupils during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector had a tour of the school site with two members of staff to ascertain the safety of the school site.
- Inspectors took account of parents' free-text comments and the responses on the Ofsted Parent View survey. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kirsty Foulkes	His Majesty's Inspector
Eve Morris	His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress; and
 - 3(j) does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the 2010 Act[10].

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 23(1)(a) suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils.

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 32(1)(a) the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector[14], the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate[15];
 - 32(1)(b) the information specified in sub-paragraph (3) is made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate;
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;
 - 32(1)(e) following an inspection under section 87(1) of the 1989 Act, a copy of the report of the inspection (if it has been sent to the proprietor) is published and maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to the parents of each boarder; and
 - 32(1)(f) an annual written report of each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught is provided to the parents of that registered pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise.
- 32(2) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(2)(a) the school's address and telephone number and the name of the head teacher;
 - 32(2)(b) either-
 - 32(2)(b)(i) where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is-
 - 32(3)(a) particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions;
 - 32(3)(b) particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language;
 - 32(3)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2;
 - 32(3)(d) particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13;

- 32(3)(f) details of the complaints procedure referred to in paragraph 33, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year; and
- 32(3)(g) a copy of the report of any inspection carried out under sections 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act or section 87(1) of the 1989 Act.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- 33 The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which-
 - 33(a) is in writing;
 - 33(b) is made available to parents of pupils;
 - 33(c) sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint;
 - 33(d) allows for a complaint to be made and considered initially on an informal basis;
 - 33(e) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (d), establishes a formal procedure for the complaint to be made in writing;
 - 33(f) where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e), makes provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by or on behalf of the proprietor and consisting of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint;
 - 33(g) ensures that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school;
 - 33(h) allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish;
 - 33(i) provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is-
 - 33(i)(i) provided to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about; and
 - 33(i)(ii) available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher;
 - 33(j) provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e) and-
 - 33(j)(i) whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and
 - 33(j)(ii) action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and
 - 33(k) provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a

body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- 3(1) The responsible body of a school in England and Wales must prepare-
 - 3(1)(a) an accessibility plan
- 4(1) In preparing an accessibility plan, the responsible body must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementing the plan.

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