

Al-Futuwwa Girls Secondary School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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

Al-Futuwwa Girls Secondary School was registered in May 2011 and opened in September 2011 in Barking, Essex. It is located in an annexe in the grounds of a mosque complex. It is registered as an independent day school for girls aged from 11 to 16 years of age and currently there are 14 students attending aged from 11 to 14 years, who are taught in one class. The school admits Muslim girls of any ethnic and linguistic background. There are no girls with a statement of special educational needs. This is the school's first Ofsted inspection.

The school aims to foster good character and knowledge in the girls, by promoting the virtues of honesty, peacefulness, gentleness, generosity and gratitude and by helping the girls to become effective lifelong learners.

Evaluation of the school

Al-Futuwwa Girls Secondary School has made a positive start; it provides a good quality of education and effectively fulfils its aims. Through a good curriculum and effective teaching, the girls are enabled to make good progress. The girls' personal development, behaviour, positive relationships and attitudes to work are notable features and are all good. All requirements regarding safeguarding are effectively met. The school meets all but one of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of the girls effectively. It provides good opportunities for them all to learn and make progress and prepares them well for the next stage of their education by placing a strong emphasis on developing their English, mathematical and scientific skills and knowledge. It includes all of the required areas of learning, is based on national guidance, and planning reflects the careful consideration given to meeting all of the girls' needs, including those who may need additional help. The curriculum includes an Islamic Studies programme consisting of an *alima* (learned woman) course and Arabic lessons. The broad Islamic programme also includes *tajweed* (memorising and recitation of the Qur'an), *Fiqh* (Islamic law), *hadith* (traditions about the Prophet Muhammad) and the life of

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Muhammad, with *adaab* and *akhlaq* (moral teaching) which have a strong impact on the girls' linguistic, moral and spiritual development. In addition to Islamic studies, the school teaches religious education (RE) which includes work on different world religions. The school is developing a curriculum for Key Stage 4, most of which is now ready for September 2012 when they will have Year 10 girls.

The programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education incorporates the Islamic and citizenship curriculum. This reflects the ethos of the school and makes a strong contribution to the girls' personal development. There are suitable individual education plans for students needing particular support. As the school expands it plans to offer a wide range of subjects at GCSE level and proposes to recruit additional staff, with the required GCSE subject expertise, next school year. A well-planned, coherent curriculum programme ensures that the girls progress in their learning without unnecessary repetition in the mixed-age class. The girls' speaking and listening and reading skills are promoted exceptionally well, both in English lessons where the girls participate in discussion and in drama. The girls enjoy music which is played and *nasheeds* (Islamic and Arabic songs) sung during art and Islamic studies sessions, but the school knows that opportunities for musical activities are underdeveloped. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively, especially in research work. An appropriate programme of careers education has recently been established and meets requirements. The curriculum is enhanced with a good range of out-of-school visits, which have included trips to the British Museum, Gardens of Peace and a country park. Currently, there is only an after-school drama club and the school plans to extend the number of clubs provided when they have additional accommodation.

Teaching and assessment are good. Provision is not outstanding because girls are not making outstanding progress over time. Teaching is consistently effective in ensuring that the girls are motivated and engaged. The girls participate fully and are interested and motivated to learn in lessons. In the well-paced lessons the girls respond positively to instructions, are very keen to cooperate and complete the tasks given to them and behave well. For example, in a science lesson, the girls experimented in dissolving different substances, working very well together and in discussing, collating and then explaining their results. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of the three year groups in the class and include an appropriate range of different learning activities, supported by the excellent relationships between both the staff and the girls and the girls themselves. Teachers' strong subject knowledge enthuses and challenges most of the girls and contributes to their good progress. There is good teaching support provided for those who are new to learning the Arabic language.

A strong feature of the provision is the way teachers continually assess the girls using the National Curriculum level descriptors to set them appropriate short-term targets. The girls know the levels at which they are working and channel their efforts towards achieving their targets, which challenge both the older and more able girls to do their best. This process also motivates those who may lack confidence, with the additional support from teachers' positive responses and encouragement. The

good teaching provides consistent challenge through tasks that are generally well matched to the girls' varying needs. The teachers listen to the girls' views and use questioning well during lessons and ensure that the tasks and explanations given improve learning. Teaching is underpinned by the excellent knowledge that teachers have of the girls' individual needs. In English most girls write confidently at length and have been studying *War Horse* texts, picturing themselves in the various roles of the characters. The girls make particularly good progress in mathematics. Homework is used well to extend learning. The girls indicated that they had too much homework in some subjects, but inspectors found that the amount of work given was appropriate and matched the school's homework policy. Additional staff support is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. A good range of resources for teaching and learning are available and are used well in lessons, including the use of ICT.

Assessment procedures are effective and assessment information is used well to inform future planning. The school tracks the girls' progress effectively. The small class size ensures that teachers are often able to speak to the girls individually about their work and they are encouraged to self-assess their progress. The girls are provided with detailed feedback, both orally and through careful marking of their work. They then know how well they have done and can discuss what they need to do to sustain and improve their progress. As a result of the good curriculum, teaching and assessment, all girls make good progress. They are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The girls' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are good. The girls confirmed through discussions and their questionnaires that they enjoy their education, which is shown through their high attendance. Their attitudes to learning are positive and they actively and enthusiastically take part in class activities. The girls are given additional responsibilities through the school council and are kind and supportive to the younger members of the group. They all mix well together and confirmed that they were all friends. Some made comments, such as, 'I really like it here...the teachers give you a lot of help.' They greet visitors and other adults appropriately. The girls are provided with suitable opportunities to raise their self-confidence and self-esteem by taking part in extra-curricular activities, such as drama, and through the many opportunities to express themselves during lessons. The Islamic programme, which includes regular assemblies, along with the simple school rules and the positive staff role models helps the girls to distinguish between right and wrong. They have adequate opportunities to learn about English institutions in their citizenship programme and through educational visits. However, provision could be better in providing a wider range of information about public services and institutions in England and beyond.

In the religious and Islamic studies lessons pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, which help them to understand the various communities in a multicultural society. As a result, pupils become tolerant and respectful toward those with

different views and lifestyles. The school is considering providing further opportunities to visit places linked with different cultures. Current links with local community organisations are limited but are developing.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for girls' welfare, health and safety is good. The school has devised, and has effectively implemented, a range of policies which pay due regard to national guidance. These include anti-bullying, health and safety, including arrangements for visits outside school, behaviour and safeguarding. The designated person responsible for child protection is trained appropriately in both safeguarding and safer recruitment. All staff are suitably trained in child protection and the detailed safeguarding policy fully meets requirements.

The school undertakes appropriate risk assessments for all activities and visits outside the school and is vigilant in checking safety within the school building and outdoor area. There are sufficient staff who are suitably trained in first aid and any accidents are carefully recorded. Girls are encouraged to eat healthily and opportunities are available for regular exercise. The precautions for fire prevention are thorough, with a fire risk assessment undertaken, fire appliances checked annually and fire drills undertaken each term and formally recorded. The girls are very well supervised at all times. The admission and attendance registers are kept in accordance with requirements. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and has devised a three-year accessibility plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has carried out all of the required checks on all staff and others to confirm their suitability to work with children. The single central record contains all of the necessary information.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation create a pleasant environment and enable the girls to learn safely and effectively. The building is in very good order and there is adequate outdoor space for play and recreation. The school has one large ground floor classroom divided into smaller areas for ICT, prayer and practical activities. It is attractively decorated with examples of the girls' work displayed, that suitably celebrates their achievements and success. The school is planning to make use of an adjacent building which will include additional classrooms, a sports hall and an office. The girls make good use of a local park and a small adjacent outdoor area. The school does not have suitable facilities for those who ill.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or is made available, to parents and others. The school provides sufficient clear, accurate and up-to-date information

through its website for all interested parties. Parents and carers are kept well informed through regular reports on their children's attainment and progress and via consultation evenings. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were generally positive in their response. One commented, 'I like the ethos of the school; the head and staff put all their effort into implementing this.' A very small number were unclear about the arrangements made to teach their daughters together in only one class and about the amount of homework they were given. It was, however, explained to the parents and carers, before their daughters started at the school, that there would initially be only be one class. Homework is used well to support learning and an appropriate amount is given.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets regulatory 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'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there are appropriate facilities for those who are ill, in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- extend the range of opportunities for the girls to acquire a knowledge of public institutions and services in England and to establish contacts with local community organisations
- provide additional opportunities for musical activities.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

Inspection judgements

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 day		
Type of school	Muslim Secondary		
Date school opened	September 2011		
Age range of pupils	11–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 14	Total: 14
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)	£2,900		
Address of school	2 Victoria Road (Annex Building) Barking IG11 8PY		
Telephone number	020 8478 5115		
Email address	enquiries@al-futuwwaschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Naeem Aslam		
Proprietor	Naeem Aslam		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 April 2012

Dear Girls

Inspection of Al Futuwwa Girls Secondary School, Barking IG11 8PY

Thank you for your welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed our visit, including the opportunity to speak with a number of you. The inspection judged that Al-Futuwwa School provides a good quality of education through effective teaching and a good curriculum which both enable you to make good progress.

We were pleased to learn from talking to you, and your questionnaires confirm, that you enjoy your education and you recognise that the staff care about you and you show respect to them. You all work well together and concentrate on your work and give of your best. You mentioned that you had a lot of homework. We discussed this issue with the headteacher and staff and concluded that the amount given was reasonable and in line with the school's homework policy.

You also expressed an interest in having more music in addition to the singing you have in Islamic studies. We have asked the school to try and provide more music teaching as part of the curriculum. We have also asked the school to provide more opportunities for you to learn about English services and institutions and to become more involved in your local community. The school must provide facilities for those who are ill.

With all best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bainton
Lead inspector