

Islamia Girls' High School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Katharine Halifax

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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

Islamia Girls' High School provides an Islamic and academic education for girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years of any ethnic and cultural background. The school opened in 1984, and is situated close to the centre of Huddersfield in West Yorkshire. The school aims to enable the girls to achieve an understanding of Islamic values while promoting an understanding of their responsibilities as British citizens. In addition, it aims to 'provide a caring, safe and a well-ordered environment for the girls to develop their educational and life skills, and foster in each child the understanding that individual needs are paramount, thus becoming valued citizens of the community'. Currently 27 girls are on roll. All are of Asian heritage and speak English as their first language. At the time of the inspection, no student had a statement of special educational need. The school was last inspected in October 2009.

Evaluation of the school

This is a good school that is going from strength to strength. It has made good improvement since the last inspection. In addition to providing a good education, the school enables students to make outstanding progress in their personal development and good progress in their studies. It promotes outstanding behaviour. As at the time of the last inspection, all regulations are met. There has been considerable improvement in students' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT), and in the provision for Islamic studies. The outstanding provision for students' welfare, health and safety ensures that requirements are met to guarantee the safeguarding of all students, including those whose circumstances mean they have the potential to be vulnerable.

Quality of education

Students make good progress because of a good curriculum and good teaching. In addition to providing all the required areas of learning, the curriculum effectively meets the school's aim of encouraging students to go onto higher education while providing a comprehensive Islamic education programme and preparing students to live in a diverse Britain. The curriculum policy and schemes of work are used

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

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

effectively to raise attainment. Long-term plans take account of National Curriculum programmes of study but planning for individual lessons is of variable quality. Teachers are quick to identify students who have a gift or talent, and also those who learn more slowly. However, while lessons in English, mathematics and science provide tasks for students' differing abilities, this is not always so in other subjects. Furthermore, the activities offered do not always challenge the most able students.

The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is outstanding. As well as contributing considerably to students' understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, it enables students to appreciate their role as good citizens and prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. Following the previous inspection, the provision for ICT has improved. In addition to discrete lessons, teachers are now skilled in using technology to support learning in all subjects. The effective curriculum for *ders-e-nezami*, (Islamic studies), enables students to have a deeper understanding of *Deen* (the Islamic way of life). Instruction in Muslim values, teaching and practices ensures students understand the expectations of them as Muslims. Lessons in Arabic language and literature meet the religious needs of students, while Urdu enables them to appreciate their cultural heritage. In addition, students' achievements in French contribute to their understanding of life in Europe.

Students' learning is enriched through a wide range of visits and visitors. For example, visits to science museums, art galleries, and to see professional productions of Shakespeare's plays increase students' enjoyment and understanding. Themed days in all subjects add to students' enjoyment and achievements, as well as enabling them to transfer the knowledge between subjects. Though the number of after-school clubs is limited because other groups use the building, opportunities such as the 'creative writing club' have resulted in some of the students' poems being published.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teachers are all specialists in their subjects and this partly explains why students acquire knowledge and skills at a good rate. Students now take greater responsibility for their learning. This has increased their understanding of how to improve. For example, the use of partner discussions alongside students assessing their own and partners' work has resulted in students' increased understanding of how to make greater progress. Lessons are conducted with a sense of urgency with a variety of tasks to maintain students' interest.

Teachers are accurate in their assessment of students' work. Attainment and progress are recorded systematically for English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, while progress is assessed and appropriate targets set, the recording is not as consistent. The provision of homework is good and contributes considerably to learning. Students enthused about a commercial educational programme purchased by the school. They use this in school and at home, saying it is particularly successful in increasing their rate of progress.

Students make good progress over time and, as observed, in lessons. The rate of progress accelerates in Years 10 and 11 when girls who joined the school in Years 8

and 9 have settled. All are entered for between seven and eleven GCSE subjects. As a result of the improved rate of progress, standards are rising. For the past three years, all students have attained more than five A* to C grades. However, this does not always include both English and mathematics. Progress in Islamic Studies is good with most students attaining GCSE accreditation in this area.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is reflected in their high attendance, outstanding behaviour and general demeanour. Students enjoy learning. Their participation in lessons is generally excellent. They take a pride in their work, often doing far more homework than has been set, for example, researching a new topic or producing a multi-media presentation.

Students are very proud of their Islamic identity. Participation in daily assemblies and prayers contributes significantly to their spiritual development. In addition, teachers plan for students to experience new situations. For example, during a citizenship lesson, the destruction of a model prompted sensitive discussion about the feelings of others when something precious is destroyed. Through the curriculum, students gain a deeper understanding of many of the major world faiths, and respect for other cultures. Studies in art have enabled students to appreciate a wide range of western art, as well as that of their own heritage.

Students are resourceful and very well prepared for their future. Careers education and guidance and work experience give students an understanding of the attributes and personal skills they need to be employable. They demonstrate enterprise through selling home-made produce to fund trips, or being resourceful in acquiring funds to pay for library books. Each term, they produce a high-quality newspaper giving details of the topics covered in school, visitors including the author Joanne Harris, as well as personal experiences such as taking part in Hajj.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for students' welfare, health and safety. Adults are fully conversant with the behaviour, anti-bullying, and health and safety policies. Students say this is so in practice, and that the school is a calm, harmonious environment. The welfare, health and safety of students are of the highest priority and a careful eye is kept on students whose circumstances have the potential to render them vulnerable. Possible risks within the school are identified and rigorous assessments undertaken prior to any off-site visits. The school raises very effectively students' awareness about the dangers of smoking and the abuse of drugs. Training in child protection is up to date with staff being encouraged to undertake an on-line course to reinforce their understanding. First aid and fire risk assessments are similarly up-to-the-minute. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The procedures to recruit new staff are rigorous. All the required checks have been undertaken to ensure that staff and the proprietors are suitable to work with children. The school maintains a single central register of checks undertaken which meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The accommodation is good and provides a suitable environment for safe and effective learning. Classrooms are of a generous size with adequate lighting supplemented by natural light from the large windows. Specialist rooms are available for art, ICT and science. Though the room for science is very basic, teachers have worked imaginatively to ensure this does not affect students' attainment. Plans are well advanced for a food technology room. The medical room is large and airy and within easy access of the office and toilet facilities. Toilet facilities for staff and for students are adequate and clean. While the premises are used for 'supplementary school' and youth clubs, the headteacher manages this well so there is no disruption to the students' learning. Students benefit from a large outdoor area, though leaders have identified this as an area for improvement. Until this has been refurbished, good use is made of nearby sports fields for a wide range of physical activities. Colourful, high quality art displays make the corridors attractive. Furthermore, classroom displays support learning and celebrate achievement. Students say any concerns they have about the premises or ideas for improvement are relayed to the school's management team via the school council.

Provision of information

The school enjoys very good relations with parents, carers, partners and the local authority. Parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were pleased with the school, commenting that 'it is a good school with a balanced ethos'. Communications between the school and parents and carers are informative. Consultation evenings are very well attended and parental concerns conveyed to school managers. Students' planners are used effectively to provide an effective channel of communication between school and home. Annual reports of progress give a clear indication of students' attitude to work, the levels they achieve and the expected grade in public examinations. In addition, informative 'curriculum books' for each student not only give details of topics for the year, but also useful websites for each subject, and activities to enable parents to help their daughters at home.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a suitable complaints policy and a set of procedures which meet all of the regulations. Leaders have taken steps to ensure that parents and carers are aware of them.

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:

- raise the proportion of students attaining GCSE grades A*- C in both English and mathematics
- ensure all staff are familiar with the school's principal tracking system and use it to monitor and record the progress of students in all subjects
- ensure that planning and activities in all subjects take account of students' individual needs and abilities.

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		
Type of school	Muslim day		
Date school opened	1984		
Age range of pupils	11-16 years		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 27	Total: 27
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
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)	£1,000 (£800 for siblings)		
Address of school	2 Thornton Lodge Hall Thornton Lodge Road Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD1 3JP		
Telephone number	01484 535674		
Email address	islamiagirls@hotmail.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Samira El-Turabi		
Proprietor	Islamia Trust		

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.



23 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Islamia Girls' High School, Huddersfield, HD1 3JQ

As you may recall, a little while ago I spent a short time looking at your school. I really enjoyed my time with you. Thank you for talking to me and making me feel so welcome. I especially enjoyed seeing all the work you have produced. It was clear from our chats and the questionnaire replies I received from you, and your parents and carers, that you enjoy school, and believe that you are safe and well cared for.

Your school provides you with a good education. As the result of good teaching and a well-thought-through curriculum, your achievement is good. In addition to working hard, you have a positive attitude to everything the school offers. You enjoy lessons, sporting competitions (especially the football!), and visits out of school. You are very well behaved.

Here are some areas I have asked your leaders to consider to improve your school.

- You do well in attaining A* - C grades in many subjects at GCSE. More of you need to gain this level in both English and mathematics.
- A good system has been introduced to keep a check on your progress in English, mathematics and science; I would like to see teachers using this in all subjects.
- Your teachers know which of you are talented, and those of you who learn more slowly. Although this difference is catered for in some subjects, I would like to see it happen in all subjects.

I know you will do all you can to help your teachers and I wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely,

Katharine Halifax
Lead Inspector