

# Oak Tree High

Independent school standard inspection report

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|-------------------------------|---------------|
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| Inspection number             | 397687        |
| Inspection dates              | 3–4 July 2012 |
| Reporting inspector           | Peter Toft    |

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Oak Tree High is an independent secondary day school for girls. It serves an urban area near the centre of Sheffield. It opened in September 2011 and was registered to operate as an independent school for up to 50 students in October 2011. The school is based in a self-contained section of a large building, used previously by the local authority as a vocational training centre. The building is owned and maintained by a charitable trust, The Yorkshire Muslim Academy; it is used for a range of the Academy's community activities as well as by the school. There are 42 students on roll aged between 11 and 13 years; all are of Asian or middle-eastern heritage and the vast majority are British nationals. None of these students has a statement of special educational needs. None is looked after by the local authority. Most of the students speak English as their first language. The school operates within an Islamic ethos and will accept students of all religious backgrounds. It aims to provide an environment in which students can develop academically, morally and spiritually by taking a full and active part in school life and striving for excellence in all that is attempted. This is the school's first inspection.

## **Evaluation of the school**

The school provides a good quality of education and meets its aims well. Students are taught within a good and broad curriculum, with particularly rigorous coverage of English, mathematics, science, Arabic and religious education. Teaching is good and in the small classes students benefit from individualised attention as well as the teachers' skilful leadership of whole-class activity; the students thus make good progress and develop self-confidence and strong communication skills. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good; it strongly supports the students' outstanding behaviour. The school makes outstanding provision to promote the care, welfare, health, safety and safeguarding of students. The vast majority of the regulations for continued registration as an independent school are met.

## **Quality of education**

The quality of the curriculum is good and it provides a strong foundation for the good progress which students of all abilities make. It is particularly effective in the rigorous way in which the core subjects of English, mathematics and science,

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

together with Arabic and religious education, are planned and taught. Curricular planning is well grounded in the school's good policy, which focuses sharply on covering the subjects of the National Curriculum as the basis for students to realise their academic potential and develop ambitions towards further study and high-quality employment after school. Lessons and units of work are well planned and the teachers make good use of authoritative published schemes of work as well as their strong subject expertise to prepare lessons which students find interesting and challenging. Timetabling is efficient and leads to a broad and balanced curriculum which covers all subjects of the National Curriculum, except for music which is not taught for religious reasons. Subjects are taught rigorously, although history is not as thoroughly covered as the rest of the curriculum. All required areas of learning are covered.

Lessons enable students of differing abilities to make the progress of which they are capable; where necessary, those with learning difficulties are supported very effectively by a teaching assistant. The curriculum and its teaching are instrumental in lifting the ambitions of the students and encouraging them to have high aspirations for the future. Careers advice supports this and the students spoken to had clear ideas about a range of careers which might become open to them in the future. The curriculum gives all students plenty of opportunity to engage in lessons, make positive contributions and to develop personally, as do the regular and highly participative assemblies. However, reflecting the small size of the school, the contribution made to this by extra-curricular activities and educational visits beyond the school is not as well developed as is the highly effective provision elsewhere in the curriculum, for example, in basic skills.

Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The lessons seen were good or outstanding. This high quality reflects sharply focused planning, the strong subject specialisms of the teachers, their palpable enthusiasm for what they teach, and their skilful capacity to engage whole classes in rigorous explanation, discussion and thinking in response to questions posed. Students feel highly involved and the staff are adept at 'keeping them on their toes' and ensuring that the pace of lessons is brisk. They use questioning carefully to ascertain how well individual students have understood and are responsive enough to be able to go over material not yet sufficiently digested. Students are highly motivated and are determined to make good progress. They respond well to the all-female teaching and many show every sign of being interested in, and seeing the relevance of, subjects such as mathematics and science. Relationships in lessons are excellent. Staff make good use of their detailed knowledge of individual students to promote their learning. They assess work regularly, by marking and testing, and have developed good procedures to identify the National Curriculum levels being attained by the students. Though the marking is frequent, it does not always make clear to students what they need to do to improve.

Students make good progress as a result of the school's good provision of teaching and the well-planned curriculum. Progress in both academic and personal development is particularly notable given the short time in which the school has been opened. This is a significant achievement for the staff and managers.

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy participating in school life and this is reflected in their good attendance and outstanding behaviour. The school has clear and broad aims to promote personal, as well as academic, development. This is supported by a strong religious ethos and highly effective pastoral care. Students have a deep appreciation of and respect for their Islamic traditions. By interacting with each other, they become increasingly aware of how these relate to the differing middle-eastern and Asian countries from which their families came. The curriculum also gives them a good insight into British culture and its multi-racial nature. Religious education makes a major contribution to this development as well as to students' moral and spiritual development, and their opportunities to reflect on life. The school is rightly proud of the tolerance and harmony which is promoted between students. This makes a major contribution to the school's promotion of social cohesion. Students respect for people of other cultures is evident in their attitudes when discussing the wider community and in their dealings with external visitors. Students are made well aware of the public institutions of England. Relationships are excellent throughout this well-ordered and purposeful school. Students are prepared effectively for their future economic well-being, not least through the rigorous teaching of basic skills and the school's focus on promoting growing self-confidence and independence. They learn to be mature and self-disciplined, and to hold positions of responsibility, for example in assemblies.

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

Provision to promote the welfare, health, safety and safeguarding of pupils is outstanding throughout the school. Staff use consistently a wide range of clear policies to secure this provision. These policies are regularly reviewed and implemented by the staff. They support the excellent pastoral care of students. Child protection procedures are comprehensive and staff, including the headteacher who is the designated officer for safeguarding, have been trained at the required levels. This training is up to date. The school operates robust procedures in recruiting staff. The staff are very clear about their responsibilities for health and safety, and for supervising pupils, and they are diligent in carrying them out. The premises are well managed and maintained and they comply with health and safety requirements. Procedures for fire safety are robust and the school has been checked by fire officers. A comprehensive policy to counter bullying in all its forms is well followed by the staff; there is no sign that any bullying takes place. Teachers are highly effective in helping pupils to understand how to stay healthy and safe, and to consider the safety and feelings of others. The strong encouragement to consider others which students receive contributes significantly to the school's high level of inclusivity and the close friendships which students form. The school has plans to increase the size of its teaching space and to do so with disabled access in mind; it meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Admissions and attendance registers are properly maintained.

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

The suitability of all staff, volunteers and governors to work with students has been checked as required. The necessary information is kept up to date on a single central register of checks.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school occupies a corner section of a large building owned and used by the Yorkshire Muslim Academy for religious, educational and community activities. The school area is self-contained. Classrooms are appropriate in size, well decorated and provide comfortable areas for learning. General classrooms are supplemented by specialist rooms for science and information and communication technology. Circulation corridors enable the safe movement of students around the school. The external play area is adequate for informal play and socialising. There is provision in the building for a large gymnasium to be established which the school plans to use but this remains to be completed. Washroom and medical facilities meet requirements.

## **Provision of information**

There is no school website. A concise school prospectus containing useful information is made available to all parents, carers and others. However, there are some omissions from this document of policies and procedures which should be made available to parents and carers. As the school approaches the end of its first year of operation it is putting the finishing touches to preparation for sending annual progress reports on students to parents and carers. Informal communications between parents, carers and staff are good; parents and carers are highly satisfied with the ways in which the school communicates with them.

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

The policy and procedures for handling complaints meet all but one of the requirements, namely to ensure that parents and careers receive a copy of the procedures.

## **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.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made).

- ensure that the information below 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:
  - particulars of policies related to bullying and health and safety on the premises and on school trips
  - the number of staff employed and a summary of their qualifications. (paragraph 24(1)(b))
- ensure the safeguarding children policy is sent to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils, on request (paragraph 24(1)(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the manner in which complaints are to be handled (standards in part 7) and must:

- ensure that parents and carers are informed about and have access to the school's complaints procedure (paragraph 25(b)).

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

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

- strengthen the provision for the teaching of history
- extend the range of extra-curricular activities to enrich the provision made in the timetabled curriculum
- make the marking of work more effective by using written comments to show how the students can improve.

## Inspection judgements

|             |      |              |            |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

### 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 | √ |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|



## School details

|   |                                     |           |           |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>School status</b>  | Independent                         |           |           |
| <b>Type of school</b>   | Muslim                              |           |           |
| <b>Date school opened</b>   | September 2011                      |           |           |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>  | 11-13 years                         |           |           |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>   | Girls                               |           |           |
| <b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>                              | Boys: 0                             | Girls: 42 | Total: 42 |
| <b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>                              | Boys: 0                             | Girls: 0  | Total: 0  |
| <b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b> | Boys: 0                             | Girls: 0  | Total: 0  |
| <b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>                          | Boys: 0                             | Girls: 0  | Total: 0  |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>                                       | £1,000                              |           |           |
| <b>Address of school</b>  | Bland Street<br>Sheffield<br>S4 8DG |           |           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>   | 0114 361 0114                       |           |           |
| <b>Email address</b>  | oaktreehighschool@gmail.com         |           |           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>  | Tahseen Kauser                      |           |           |
| <b>Proprietor</b>   | Irshad Akbar, Chair of Governors    |           |           |

**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.**



5 July 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Oak Tree High School, Sheffield, S4 8DG**

I promised to let you know what I thought about your school after I had finished the inspection.

- Oak Tree High gives you a good education and you are making good progress.
- The teachers are very keen for you learn about your subjects in depth. You clearly find this very interesting. What you are learning will be very useful to you as you prepare for life after school.
- You are given lots of opportunities to make presentations, discuss and take a full part in lessons. This is very useful to help you develop self-confidence.
- The headteacher and the staff take excellent care of you. They are very effective at making sure you are safe and that you become very considerate of other people. Your behaviour is excellent.
- Your personal and religious development is good and I know that your parents and carers are very satisfied with what you learn.
- The headteacher and governors are keen to make your school even better. I have suggested that they do this by: strengthening the teaching of history; enriching the curriculum by having more activities and educational trips out of school; and ensuring that the marking of your work gives you a clear idea of what you need to do to improve it.

I would like to thank all of you, and the teachers, parents, carers and governors, who helped me and talked to me during my visit, and completed the inspection questionnaires. I wish you, your parents, carers and all of the staff and governors my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Toft  
Lead Inspector