

Bolton Muslim Girls School

Swan Lane, Bolton, Lancashire, BL3 6TQ

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding. From broadly average starting points when they join the school in Year 7, all students and groups of students make exceptional progress across all years and a wide range of subjects. They reach standards which are well above national averages by the time they leave school.
- Teaching is outstanding. Lessons are characterised by high expectations and ambition for students to achieve. Teachers work exceptionally hard to ensure that they provide exciting activities which meet the needs of all students. Relationships are excellent, and all students are well supported to ensure that they achieve extremely well in each lesson.
- Behaviour is outstanding and results in a community which is totally harmonious and where all students feel valued. Students say that they feel very safe because of the high levels of care which they receive from all adults. They treat each other with great respect, and close collaboration and support for each other underpins everything that they do. They are very proud of their school, thoroughly enjoy learning, and this ensures that attendance is much higher than average.
- Leadership is outstanding. Under the skilful and inspirational guidance of the headteacher, supported by governors, staff have united in a determination to provide an educational experience for students which will ensure that they achieve their full potential both academically and personally. All areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been fully addressed as a result of monitoring and evaluation systems which are extremely effective.
- A distinctive feature of this school is the success it achieves in blending the academic progress of the students with their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students are provided with an excellent curriculum which not only meets their academic needs but provides them with an extensive range of enrichment opportunities. This has created a cohesive and caring society where students recognise their responsibilities to those in the school and the wider community.
- Some exceptional practice in teachers' marking is not used in every subject area.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and achievement in parts of 25 lessons, taught by 25 teachers.
- Inspectors observed students' behaviour around school. They talked to them informally about their views and their learning, as well as holding formal meetings with different groups of students.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with senior and middle leaders, and teaching staff. They also met with members of the governing body, and with a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 40 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as the views expressed in other surveys that had been undertaken by the school. Inspectors also met with representatives from the parents' forum.
- The inspection team examined a range of documentation, including information about the progress of current students from the school's own tracking data. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' monitoring records, including the outcomes of lesson observations, as well as documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and safety.

Inspection team

Christine Birchall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Johan MacKinnon	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bolton Muslim Girls School is a much smaller than average secondary school. All students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the majority being of Indian and Pakistani heritage, and most speak English as an additional language. Only a very small minority are at the early stages of English language acquisition.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. Pupil premium funding is provided by the government to support students who are eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority, or who are the children of military personnel. In this school the majority of students entitled to the pupil premium are those who are eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students who are supported at school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school site and facilities are limited. The school makes arrangement to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by this by using the facilities of other institutions where necessary, for example, by using the local sports arena for physical education and Bolton Technology Centre for elements of technology and science.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the outstanding practice in teachers' marking, which already exists in some subject areas, to ensure that all teachers consistently use marking as an opportunity to engage students in a discussion about their progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students make exceptional progress across all five years at school because of the excellent teaching and support which they receive. The proportion of students who gain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has been significantly higher than the national average in recent years, and the school's own tracking data and inspection evidence indicates that this trend will continue.
- Students who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make outstanding progress. Although they attain on average half a grade lower than other students in school, they reach higher standards than those eligible for pupil premium funding nationally. The gaps in school between the attainment of those who are eligible for pupils premium funding and those who are not are narrower than the national gaps.
- Students make outstanding progress in English because they are encouraged to develop their ideas through discussion so that they are confident and articulate. Great emphasis is placed on the development of literacy skills across the curriculum, and there are ample opportunities in lessons for pupils to practise reading. The targeted use of the reading recovery programme ensures that students make rapid progress and that they have the necessary reading skills to access the curriculum. The support given to learners who speak English as an additional language is highly effective in ensuring that they have the literacy and communication skills necessary to achieve at GCSE level.
- In mathematics, students make outstanding progress because teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to ensure that they plan systematically for students to develop their mathematical understanding. This ensures that students have a secure grasp of mathematical concepts, and that they are provided with regular opportunities to apply their skills to real life situations and problem solving.
- Teachers and leaders have extremely rigorous systems for tracking the progress of individuals and groups of students, and this allows them to provide additional support at a very early stage for any student who may be at risk of underachieving. The school has also refined its curriculum at Key Stage 4 to ensure that it now meets the needs of learners of all abilities. This, and the first-rate support which they receive from the special needs faculty, ensures that those students with disabilities or who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. The majority leave with five or more good GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. An indication of their success is that every student who left last year secured a place in employment, education or training.
- The school does not have a consistent approach to entering students early for GCSE exams, but uses the opportunities flexibly, varying year on year to meet the needs of the students. This has been highly successful and has not limited student achievement in any way.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- School leaders have invested very heavily in professional development for all teachers to ensure that they have the skills to meet the needs of all students. Teachers have high expectations of themselves and the students. As a result teaching over time is outstanding.
- Teachers' lesson planning is very thorough and ensures that activities build on each other to promote maximum progress. Lessons are supported by a range of practical materials and teachers ensure that learning is purposeful, pacy and fun. For example, in an outstanding English lesson, students were divided into groups and given a number of cards with key words related to the book they were studying. They had to take it in turns to talk for 30 seconds about their word. This was a quick but highly effective way of checking students' understanding, developing their speaking skills and engaging them into the lesson. Their responses were impressive.
- Cooperative learning is a particular strength of teaching which makes a significant contribution

to students' social skills as well as developing their independence. They are able to reason, justify their views and solve problems without being over-reliant on the support of the teacher. It is clear when listening to them talk in lessons that they show a depth of understanding of their work which has been built up securely over time. Teachers often use creative strategies to develop students' thinking skills. For example, in a life skills lesson the teacher provided a piece of art work as a stimulus to learning and shared very explicitly with the students the skills which she wanted them to develop. This resulted in a highly engaging and thought provoking discussion in which students shared ideas and asked questions.

- Teaching assistants make very valuable contributions to students' achievement. Expectations are as high for the less-able students as they are for the more able, and there is no loss of emphasis on subject specific vocabulary or skills. Evidence in work from these students indicates that high levels of challenge are normal. Observations of lessons showed that students develop the skills to handle difficult work with confidence because of the very positive relationships and support they receive from all adults.
- There is variation in the quality of written feedback to students. The majority of marking is positive and developmental, and provides clear next steps to help students to improve their work. However, there are examples of outstanding marking, where students respond to the teacher's comments in different coloured pen and engage in a genuine discussion about their work and progress. There is the potential for this very effective approach to be shared amongst more teachers in order to further increase the speed of students' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour around school are exemplary. Respect, courtesy, an awareness of their responsibilities to others and an ambition to achieve underpins everything that they do. They are very proud of their school, and went out of their way to share their positive views with the inspection team.
- Students feel very safe in school and this was a view which was confirmed by all parents who responded to Parent View, as well as those who spoke to inspectors. Students are aware of the different forms which bullying can take and know how to protect themselves, for example, from cyber bullying. All students feel that bullying is a rarity, and that there is always an adult on hand to whom they can express their concerns if any issues arise.
- Students have a strong sense of right and wrong and are able to discuss challenging or controversial issues in a thoughtful and sensitive manner. They are given every opportunity to reflect on the importance of their Islamic culture and faith in all lessons, but also have a good understanding of different faiths and beliefs.
- Students all feel highly valued at school and have total confidence that adults will listen to their views and act on them. This is confirmed through feedback from the student council, where students feel that they have been influential in shaping some of the curriculum and resourcing decisions in the school. For example, they now have more sporting opportunities available and are helping to develop a library.
- Students make important contributions to the school and local community. All students have an important role to play in supporting younger or vulnerable students within the school, but Year 11 also take part in weekly community service activities, such as visiting the local hospice.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and governors have a shared and highly ambitious vision for the school and are determined to provide the best opportunities for the students. The headteacher has created a highly skilled and focused leadership team. Roles and responsibilities are absolutely clear, and allow for those who are responsible for improving teaching and raising achievement to focus on

these priorities without distractions. As a result, the school has made significant improvements since the last inspection.

- Leaders have a very accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. Processes for monitoring how well the school is performing are highly robust and include leaders at all levels. For example, all staff with subject responsibilities have extensive monitoring files in which they document a wide range of evidence collected to assess the performance in their area. In addition to this they hold detailed tracking files indicating how well students are achieving. Their judgements are checked through regular departmental reviews conducted by senior leaders. This leads to clear and well planned actions to bring about improvements.
 - Close attention is paid to the progress of students and any possible underachievement is addressed very quickly. The leadership of the special educational needs department is a model of good practice and ensures that the students who receive this support achieve very well indeed. The school also provides a number of targeted programmes aimed at students who are more able, including links with universities, and this ensures that they have high aspirations and achieve well.
 - Leaders use performance management targets very effectively as a tool to improve teaching. Teachers are set targets which are precisely related to the achievement of students, and they are provided with high quality training to help them improve their teaching and achieve their targets. Teachers report that leaders have high expectations of them, but that they feel confident and well supported. Pay progression is closely linked to teacher performance and outcomes for students.
 - The well organised curriculum is a strength of the school and students talk excitedly of the range of opportunities available to them. There are clear pathways at Key Stage 4 to meet the needs of students of all abilities, and there is a programme of extensive weekly enrichment opportunities including music, arts, mountain biking and fencing, as well as Enterprise and community activities. These make an excellent contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the students, as well as ensuring that they are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school. The school's promotion of equal opportunities is outstanding.
 - The local authority has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and adopts a light touch approach to monitoring.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Over the last eighteen months governors, with the support of a consultant, have undertaken an audit of their role to identify their development needs and have produced an action plan. They have undergone training in order to ensure that they provide leaders with appropriate levels of challenge and support. They have a good understanding of the school's performance and take steps to collect first-hand evidence, for example, by meeting with students and teachers. They ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively and check that teachers' pay progression is linked to their performance. They have provided strong support to the headteacher to enable him to make the necessary changes to the curriculum and resources. Safeguarding practices are exemplary.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135096
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	412529

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	553
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yakub Patel
Headteacher	Mubaaruck Ibrahim
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2009
Telephone number	01204 361103
Fax number	01204 533220
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