

# Azhar Academy

235A Romford Road, Forest Gate, London, E7 9HL

## Inspection dates

25–27 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- Students' progress is good in both English and mathematics. They attain well over time.
- Students' behaviour and personal development are good. Their spiritual development is outstanding due to the good *Alima* (Islamic jurisprudence) and Islamic Studies courses.
- Teaching is good as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and the use of a range of activities; there is good student engagement in lessons.
- The curriculum is good and there are good schemes of work for the different areas of learning. The planning for *Alima* course is comprehensive and caters for the needs of all students well.
- Senior leaders and governors have high ambitions to achieve the best for the school. Due to their regular monitoring of the teaching and learning, students' achievement is good.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Teachers do not always provide feedback to students to ensure they know what they have to do to improve further.
- Curriculum provision for geography is not as good as in history.
- There are few after-school clubs for students.
- The school does not use the reward system as well as it might to promote good behaviour.
- Senior managers do not fully analyse the information gained from checking systems to monitor students' progress over time. The self-evaluation does not fully reflect all aspects of the school's work.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspectors observed 27 part lessons taught by 16 teachers.
- The inspectors looked at students' work and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, the head of *Alima*, Islamic Studies and *Hifz* department and the school's Islamic co-ordinator and students.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, policies, procedures and assessment records. They also examined students' work.
- Parents' and carers' views were collected through personal meetings with the inspectors. Additional information was gathered through staff questionnaires and discussions with the students.

## Inspection team

Lubna Aziz, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rory O'Doherty	Additional Inspector
Usman Mapara	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Azhar Academy is a Muslim day school for girls. The school is located in a former Victorian church in the London Borough of Newham. It was opened in 2003.
- The school is registered for girls aged from 11 to 18 years of age. The school has had no students over the age of 16 years since September 2012 and wants to continue with its registration with the Department for Education for girls aged from 11 to 16 years only.
- Currently there are 250 students on roll, none of whom has a statement of special educational needs.
- Students are mainly from Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian and Somali heritages. The majority of the students travel from Newham and the surrounding boroughs.
- The school aims to provide 'broad and balanced education to students and enrich Islamic values in them'.
- The school uses additional provision and students engage in physical education at a local sports centre.
- The school had its last full inspection in October 2010. There was a progress monitoring visit in July 2011 to check the school's progress in addressing the issues raised in the previous full inspection. The school had another progress monitoring visit in February 2012.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that students achieve the best possible progress by ensuring that marking is consistently good and students receive feedback on how to improve their work.
- Further improve the quality of the curriculum by:
  - improving the provision for geography
  - introducing more extra-curricular activities after school.
- Improve the students' welfare, health and safety by ensuring the reward system is fully used to promote good and better behaviour throughout the school.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring the self-evaluation fully reflects all areas of the school's work
  - making better use of the checking system to analyse students' rates of progress over time.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Students' achievement is good throughout the school including for those who find learning more difficult. They make good progress in English and mathematics. This is due to good teaching and the good secular and Islamic curriculum. In 2013, the progress of some students in Year 11, particularly the more able, was not as fast as in the previous year. However, due to the use of different support strategies and further training of teaching staff, all Year 11 students are now making much faster progress; this is evident in the good quality of work in their books which shows that they are making good progress. They achieve well in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics, and attain above-average GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4. Students also make good progress in Arabic and Islamic Studies which is evident from their good results in GCSE.

The school uses an electronic system to check on students' progress. However, the information from this system is not fully analysed to ensure the school gains a full picture of the progress students make over time. Students are confident readers and read fluently. They enjoy reading throughout the school and there are good opportunities for them to read in class. They have a clear understanding of the text and read for fun. Students memorise the *Qur'an* well by heart. They make good progress in their Islamic Studies.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. They behave well in class and around the school. They report that they feel safe and that there is no bullying in school. Their behaviour is respectful towards each other and the adults in school. Although the behaviour policy has suitable rewards and sanctions, occasionally, the rewards system is not used as effectively as it might be to promote good or better behaviour. Students are polite, confident and respectful towards visitors. They have good awareness of keeping themselves safe from different types of risks such as bullying and drug abuse. Students' attendance is above average and consistently improving over time. They are punctual and arrive in school on time.

The school nurtures its students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the use of the *Alima* and Islamic Studies courses. As a result of this good provision, the spiritual development of students is outstanding. Students' personal development is promoted well through its Islamic personal, social and health education programme and daily form-tutor time. Through regular assemblies students learn about moral values such as how to contribute to a Food Bank to help the needy. They are taught about their own religion and others present in Great Britain. They also take part in the 'Three Faiths Forum' where they meet students from different religions such as Catholic Christians and members of the Jewish community. They visit different places of worship such as a synagogue and gurdwara. They engage with the local community by visiting old people in a home for senior citizens and by contributing to charities such as Children in Need. They learn about balanced political views in citizenship and from a visiting Member of Parliament. This helps students to develop personal qualities to make a positive contribution to a multicultural and democratic Great Britain.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

Teaching is good and ensures all students are engaged in lessons and achieve well in their learning. Teaching instils good spiritual and moral values and teachers have good subject knowledge. The teaching of basic skills is good across the curriculum and, as a result, students make good progress in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics. For example, in an Islamic Studies lesson, students had good opportunities to develop their literacy skills. Less able students attend additional classes before and after school, which enable them to make good progress. Teachers make lessons interesting, such as in a mathematics lesson where the use of

absorbing methods fully engaged students. Students take pride in their work and enjoy creative activities. For example, in a textiles lesson students worked on their personal projects and learnt to paint on fabrics. Good use of resources such as information and communication technology (ICT) and up-to-date text books enables students to learn quickly. For example, in a science lesson the teacher used a projector to explain the adverse effects of smoking on the human body which made learning and understanding easier for students.

Students' work is marked regularly although the quality of marking varies across the school. Occasionally, marking does not tell students what they need to do to improve further. The school's electronic tracking system to measure students' progress over time is not used as well as it might be.

### Quality of curriculum

### Good

The school provides a good curriculum which covers all of the required areas of learning and which enables students to achieve well. The school has good schemes of work in most subjects including English, mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT, Arabic and Islamic Studies. The planned curriculum in *Alima* course is outstanding due to its very detailed planning and good assessment procedures. The curriculum promotes students' basic skills well and enables them to make good progress in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics across different subjects. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Students are well supported through booster classes after school which help them to get the best grades they can in GCSE. The Islamic Studies and *Alima* courses successfully link aspects of literacy, history and some aspects of geography. However, the school's provision for geography is not as strong as history and as a result, students do not learn aspects of geography in sufficient detail.

The school provides a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities through educational visits and residential campsite stays. However, discussions with students revealed they would appreciate more educational trips. There are some after-school clubs but these do not provide much variety and choice for students. Careers advice and guidance is provided through career fairs and personal, social and health education. Professionals such as an accountant visit the school to talk about their work. Students are further prepared for their future lives with the opportunity to attend work placements in Year 10 in areas such as education and legal practice. Colourful wall displays in classrooms include students' work and art displays and posters provide advice. These help to further raise their self-confidence and self-esteem.

### Pupils' welfare, health and safety

### Adequate

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is adequate. All the regulations for this area are met. Students feel safe in school and have good knowledge of how to deal with risks associated with bullying and drug misuse. There is a suitable safeguarding policy with clear procedures to deal with any incidents related to child protection. All staff including the senior designated officer for child protection are suitably trained. There is an appropriate policy for anti-bullying and behaviour. The behaviour policy has suitable rewards and sanctions, but these are not used as well as they might be to promote good and better behaviour. The school follows clear procedures for assessing risks for educational trips, the premises and other activities in school.

There is a suitable policy for first aid and the school has trained appropriate members of staff. All fire procedures, fire safety policy, fire drills, fire risk assessments and regular tests on electrical equipment are in place. The school follows safe recruitment and vetting procedures by ensuring all staff members working with students are suitable to work with them. All the required checks on members of staff are suitably recorded in the single central register. The school uses electronic admission and attendance registers and these meet the regulatory requirements. There is a staff rota to supervise the students at break times.

**Leadership and management****Good**

Leadership and management are good. Governors and senior managers have high ambitions and play an active role in the life of the school. As a result, students' achievement, the quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. Senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and teachers are set targets to improve their teaching. Consequently, teaching is improving and literacy and numeracy are well embedded across the curriculum. Senior leaders make effective use of resources and deploy staff well. They ensure a good quality Islamic education is provided through the use of *Alima* and Islamic Studies courses which cater for the needs of students well. Due to this provision, students' behaviour is good and their spiritual development is outstanding.

The school's self-evaluation does not include a review of the school's performance in all aspects of its work, and so does not fully identify all its strengths and areas for improvement. The school uses an electronic system to measure the progress of all students. However, senior leaders do not fully analyse the data to gain a better insight into students' progress over time. Students, parents, carers and staff express positive views about the school. The school provides all the required information to parents, carers and others. The complaints procedure meets the regulatory requirements. The premises and accommodation are suitable and safe for learning and are well maintained. The school wants to continue with its registration for girls of secondary school age but only up to 16 years of age.

The school meets all the independent school regulations.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134417
<b>Inspection number</b>	422766
<b>DfE registration number</b>	316/6064
<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim Day School
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18 years (currently only from 11 to 16 years)
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	250
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Azhar Academy
<b>Chair</b>	Ismail Gangat
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rookshana Adam
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£2,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8555 5959
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8534 5960
<b>Email address</b>	girls.school@azharacademy.org



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