

# Al-Ashraf Secondary School for Girls

Sinope Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL1 4AW

<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–13 March 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	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- Students' achievement is good in mathematics and science and excellent in religious studies and Urdu.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and actively involve students in their learning, which enables them to make good progress.
- Students' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- The Islamic curriculum is well planned and enables the students to make good progress in their knowledge of Islam and in their spiritual and moral development.
- The headteacher and trustees are committed to the school and have ensured that there is good teaching and that the students' achievement, behaviour and personal development are good.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching in the school. Teachers do not always provide regular feedback to students on how to improve further in their learning.
- Not all students do well enough in English because teachers do not give enough support to those of average ability who have fallen behind.
- The planning in secular subjects is not as good as in Islamic Studies. There are insufficient opportunities for after-school activities and work experience.
- Senior managers do not ensure that priorities in the self-review process are reflected in the school development plan and that risk assessments and routine monitoring are carried out with sufficient rigour.

### 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 inspector observed 11 part lessons taught by 10 teachers.
- The inspector looked at students' work and held meetings with the governors, the headteacher, staff and students.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of the school's documentation including subject planning, policies, procedures and assessment records. The inspector also examined students' work and listened to their reading.
- Parents' and carers' views were collected through personal meetings with the inspector. Additional information was gathered through staff questionnaires and discussions with the students.

## Inspection team

Lubna Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Al-Ashraf Secondary School for Girls is a Muslim day school, which is located in a former Victorian primary school building in Gloucester. It has been operating since 1994.
- The school is registered for girls aged from 11 to 16 years of age. Currently, there are 64 students on roll, one of whom has a statement of special educational needs. It is a non-selective school and all group sizes are small.
- Students are mainly from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritages. The majority of the students travel from areas such as Barton and Tredworth.
- The school aims to provide 'high quality secular and Islamic education which is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum'.
- The school uses the local sports centre for physical education.
- The school had its last full inspection in February 2011.

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

- Further improve teaching and accelerate students' progress, especially in English, so that they are as good as in mathematics by:
  - providing students with more regular feedback on how to further improve their work
  - arranging regular support in English for students of average ability who have fallen behind.
- Improve the quality of subject planning by:
  - ensuring the planned work in secular subjects, especially in English and mathematics, is as good as in Islamic Studies
  - creating more opportunities for students to take part in after-school activities and to explore the world of work.
- Improve the school's arrangements for securing students' welfare, health and safety by carrying out risk assessments more rigorously.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - monitoring and setting targets for teachers and making them accountable for the quality of their teaching
  - ensuring the school's self-review process fully identifies all the priorities so these are shown in the school improvement plan.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

The achievement of most students, including for those who have a statement of special educational needs, is good. They make good progress in mathematics and science; however, their progress in English is not as fast as in mathematics over time. In 2013, the progress of some students in Year 11, particularly in English, was not as fast as in the previous years. In English, the less able students made good progress from their starting points as they exceeded their targets, as did their more able peers. However, this was not the case for students of average ability, where only one quarter achieved their targets in English and did not receive enough support. The recent test results for current Year 11 students and scrutiny of their work in English show these students are now making better progress. Students' attainment has been consistently above average in English and mathematics in GCSE over time, except in 2013. They achieve equally well in science and other subjects. Students make very good progress in religious studies and Urdu, as is evident from their consistently excellent results in GCSE. On the whole, Indian students outperform Pakistani and Bangladeshi students.

Students are confident readers and read for relaxation. They read with expression and are able to explain the meaning of the text. There are good opportunities for reading across the subjects, such as in history and geography, and through the use of a small school library. Students learn the Islamic values and laws in well-organised Islamic subjects, and they make good progress in this area of their study.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. Their behaviour is positive in class and around the school. Students are respectful and polite towards their peers and adults and always say Islamic greetings to each other and visitors. The school has a good behaviour policy which clearly describes rewards and sanctions. Students report they look forward to coming to school and this is evident in their good punctuality and above average attendance throughout the school. In discussion, one student commented, 'I like coming to school as I like learning and lessons are fun.' The headteacher places a strong emphasis on students' spiritual, moral and personal development, as observed in an assembly on 'Importance of good character'. Students learn about public institutions and services by visiting places of interest, such as the Science Museum in London. They listen to visiting speakers, for example a representative from the Royal Air Force who provided careers advice.

Students learn about the civil and criminal law and democratic Britain in their citizenship lessons. They are taught balanced views through the teaching of religious studies. For example, they learn about views on dress, from both the Islamic viewpoint and from that of other cultures in Britain. They learn to respect their own religion and the beliefs of others, and thus develop a tolerant and harmonious relationship with others. They also visit other places of worship, such as a cathedral. They are encouraged to take responsibilities at school through the student council. They visit senior citizens in an old people's home and collect for charities such as Macmillan Cancer Research and Islamic Relief. However, discussions with students revealed they would appreciate more links with the wider community.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

The overall quality of teaching is good. As a result, most students achieve well over time, including those with a statement of special educational needs. Teachers' good subject knowledge engages students well and they learn new skills. A good range of tasks ensures students are actively involved in their learning. This was observed in a science lesson where the teacher used pair and group activities to engage students effectively. Teachers' skilful questioning and good use of

resources, such as appropriate text books, ensure that students' knowledge is secure and that the students learn quickly. Good teaching support is provided to those who have a statement of special educational needs, and students make good progress in mathematics and other subjects. Teachers manage class time efficiently to maximise the learning. This was observed in a mathematics lesson where the teacher divided her time equally to support more and less able students. Teachers, especially in Islamic Studies and religious studies, instil good spiritual and moral values. Due to this, students are confident and develop high self-esteem.

Literacy is taught across different subjects. As a result, students' skills in reading, speaking, listening and writing are improved. Teachers do not always provide feedback to students on how to further improve their work. Although teachers provide good support to less and more able students, they do not give sufficient support to those of average ability who have fallen behind in English.

### **Quality of curriculum**

### **Adequate**

The curriculum provided by the school is adequate and provides an appropriate structure through which students can learn and make progress. It covers all areas of learning and meets all the regulations. The school has appropriate plans in most subjects including English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education, citizenship, art, Urdu and Islamic Studies. Basic skills are well taught and class debates offer good opportunities for students to enhance their speaking and listening skills. Students are prepared well in most subjects for assessments at Key Stage 4. However, planning in secular subjects, such as in English and mathematics, is not as good as in Islamic Studies as the planning lacks detail. It does not always make evident how work will be provided at the right levels for students of various abilities, particularly in English. Consequently, while students make good progress in mathematics, the progress of some students in English is only adequate because they do not always receive the support they need.

The school has an adequate programme of outdoor activities through educational visits, but there are insufficient opportunities for students to take part in after-school clubs. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education and this is reinforced through assemblies, the teaching of Islamic Studies and citizenship. There are colourful displays in classrooms and corridors which include Boudica's last battle and time in Arabic. This helps to enhance students' learning. Although the school prepares its students adequately for their economic well-being, there are few opportunities for them to discover the world of work. Discussions with students revealed they would like a wider choice of work experience outside the school.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

### **Adequate**

The arrangements for securing students' welfare, health and safety are adequate. The school provides a safe environment for students and meets all regulations in this area of its work. The school has a suitable safeguarding policy, which describes clearly the referral procedure and actions to take in case of allegations against staff or headteacher. The school has trained its senior designated officer for child protection as well as all the staff members in safeguarding. There is an appropriate anti-bullying policy in place and the school follows the procedure in the case of any bullying incidents. A good behaviour policy includes a reward system for the promotion of positive behaviour and sanctions in the case of any misbehaviour. There are appropriate policies for health and safety and first aid. The school has trained appropriate numbers of staff in first aid. First aid procedures are applied appropriately and the school keeps records of all incidents.

There is a suitable fire policy and fire procedures are appropriate. Fire drills are carried out and recorded regularly. Although the school carries out risk assessments for all activities, including for fire, occasionally a few of these are not carried out with enough rigour. The school follows appropriate procedures for educational trips and carries out suitable risk assessments for any off-

site activities. The school operates safe recruitment procedures and vetting practices which meet the requirements. There are appropriate checks completed on the suitability of all staff to work with students. These are correctly recorded in the single central register. Staff have a suitable duty rota for the supervision of students. Attendance and admission registers meet the regulatory requirements.

## **Leadership and management**

**Good**

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher, senior managers and trustees are committed to the school. Due to this, the achievements of students and the quality of teaching are good. The headteacher places a strong emphasis on students' behaviour and personal development. As a result, their spiritual and moral development is good and the school is an orderly community in which the students can learn and make progress. The headteacher is open and keen to improve further the quality of teaching and raise the standards of achievement. However, monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and target setting for teachers are not rigorous enough to ensure teachers are accountable for their teaching. Most parents', staff and students' responses to questionnaires show a high level of satisfaction with the school. However, a few staff questionnaires indicated they would appreciate more training opportunities.

The school's self-review process has identified strengths and some areas for improvement. However, these priorities are not shown in the school improvement plan, such as how to improve students' progress in English. The school's premises and accommodation provide a safe and secure physical environment for students. Parents and carers are provided with all the required information and the school's complaints procedure meets the regulations. The school meets all the regulations for independent schools.

## 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>	115810
<b>Inspection number</b>	441434
<b>DfE registration number</b>	916/6073

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim Day School
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	64
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Al-Madani Educational Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Yakub Patel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Abdullah Patel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	February 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£1,100 –£1,400
<b>Telephone number</b>	01452 300465
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:iacademy@yahoo.co.uk">iacademy@yahoo.co.uk</a>



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