

London Islamic School

18-22 Damien Street, London, E1 2HX

Inspection dates 25–27 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Teaching is mostly good and enables students to make good progress in National Curriculum and Islamic subjects. As a result, students achieve well in their GCSEs and Islamic courses. The curriculum is well balanced between the different areas of learning and prepares students well for their future.
- The senior leaders and teachers have worked hard to maintain high standards over the last few years. The school knows itself well and further improvements are planned carefully. The trustees ensure that nearly all standards for independent schools are met.
- The trustees, senior leaders and teachers ensure that the school achieves its aims and that outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins students' outstanding behaviour and personal development. To this end, strong partnerships are made with the local community.
- Good organisation ensures that procedures for keeping students safe are implemented consistently.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and there is a small minority of teaching which is only adequate. Teachers do not always use improvement targets effectively enough to challenge all students, particularly the more able, and to give students a clearer picture of what they need to do to improve. The quality of marking is inconsistent.
- The senior leaders do not check on the quality of teaching and learning with sufficient rigour. The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills is not monitored sufficiently closely. The trustees do not challenge the school robustly enough. One regulation for independent schools is not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet 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. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 20 lessons or part lessons, taught by 19 different teachers. Discussions were held with students. Meetings were held with the senior leaders, teachers, Principal and Chair of the Governing Body. Documentation relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety and curriculum planning was examined. Teachers' assessments and students' work were also scrutinised.
- The inspectors also took account of the responses in 17 questionnaires completed by staff and 27 parental responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rabbi Nathaniel Lieberman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The London Islamic School is a Muslim secondary day school for boys aged between 11 and 16 years. It is located in the Whitechapel area of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It was established in 1999 and registered in 2005 for up to 129 students. The school uses Whitechapel sports facilities for games and Stepney Green AstroTurf for physical education (PE).
- There are currently 124 students on roll, nearly all of whom are of Bangladeshi heritage with a few from other minority ethnic groups. All students have English as an additional language and most are bilingual. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs and the school currently does not admit students who have special educational needs.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2008 and by Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) in March 2011.
- The school's aims are to encourage students to achieve their full potential and develop their Islamic personalities, enabling them to not only appreciate their own and other cultures but become productive and responsible British Muslim citizens.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and so help students to make outstanding progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use improvement targets more effectively to challenge all students, particularly the more able, and to give students a clearer picture of what they need to do to improve
 - provide students with consistent written feedback that helps them to improve their work and ensure that students act on this feedback
 - benefit from regular links with outstanding schools to further develop their skills.
- Strengthen the leadership and management of the school to help students to achieve outstandingly well by:
 - further developing the skills of the senior leaders so that checks on the quality of teaching and learning are sufficiently linked to accelerating students' progress, and that teachers receive consistently clear written feedback, follow-up observations and targeted professional development
 - making more effective arrangements for checking and developing the curriculum for literacy and numeracy
 - broadening the skills of the governing body so that trustees can challenge the school more robustly.
- Implement plans to further improve the premises and provide space for larger classrooms, for information and communication technology (ICT), creative and other subjects to accommodate the larger intake of the current Year 7 class.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards.**
 - Ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23A(1)(c)).

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students achieve well owing to good teaching and a good curriculum that supports their academic and personal development extremely well. Students make excellent progress in their knowledge of Islamic teachings and their understanding of how to apply them to their daily lives, because the Islamic curriculum is constructed very effectively for this purpose. Students make good progress in the *Hifz* (memorisation of the Qur'an), *alim* (Islamic theology) and *imamat* (Islamic studies) courses; an increasing proportion of those who complete the *alim* course move on to specialist colleges where they can take up a longer course providing a higher level of certification in Islamic theology.

Students typically join the school with knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science that range from below to above national expectations. They make good progress in relation to their varying starting points and their performance in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, has been consistently above national figures in the last four years. Students who joined the school with the lowest starting points catch up quickly owing to the excellent support which teachers give them in class and after school hours. However, not all of the more able students progress at the rate of which they are capable and attain A* and A grades in their GCSEs, and there are pockets of adequate progress throughout the school. This is why achievement is not yet outstanding. The GCSE results of the last three years indicate that students performed particularly highly in English language and literature, biology, chemistry, physics, religious studies and Bengali.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Students' behaviour and personal development are outstanding and reflect their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students love their school and their attendance and punctuality are good. The behaviour of most students is exemplary in and out of lessons, which contributes extremely well to the orderly and industrious atmosphere that prevails. A few Year 7 students take a little longer to settle in, but their behaviour improves over time owing to the nurturing pastoral care provided by the staff. Students are eager to learn, apply themselves and participate actively in lessons. They take pride in their achievements, which are celebrated in assemblies and two annual award ceremonies. Students say that they appreciate the Islamic environment and being free from harassment. The very positive ethos gives them the confidence to challenge bullying and racism and instances of bullying are very rare. Students are supported very effectively to respond to risks associated with extremism, drug misuse, and gun and knife crime through four annual workshops led by police officers. Students are polite, respectful and considerate towards others.

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary. Students have daily opportunities to reflect on spiritual and moral matters and how they are to be enacted in their lives. Every care has been taken to give students opportunities to find something they can excel at, whether in Qur'anic recitation, creative media projects, or poetry and sports competitions. Students' self-confidence, self-esteem and communication skills are promoted exceedingly well through monthly assemblies in which they demonstrate their public speaking skills. Students learn to distinguish right from wrong, respect the law, and champion worthy causes through the Islamic curriculum and citizenship. They show commitment to democratic values through the work of the active student council and participation in national campaigns, such as the 'if' campaign to end global hunger in the course of which they met the Prime Minister. Students learn about public institutions through personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and educational visits. Their social and enterprise skills are developed extremely well through a host of community projects including graffiti removal, drugs workshops, kicking racism out of football and fundraising

for charity. Students gain a good understanding of diversity and religious beliefs other than their own through religious studies, the Islamic curriculum, citizenship and educational visits. Students who recently visited a synagogue demonstrated respectful appreciation of similarities and differences between Judaism and Islam. The trustees have taken measures to ensure that balanced views are presented where controversial issues are discussed.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is mostly good and enables students to make good progress. It is not outstanding owing to a small minority of adequate teaching, and there are some refinements required in assessment to accelerate students' progress further. Teachers form a stable body of dedicated staff who work closely together to further develop the school and raise achievement. They benefit from continuous professional development but have insufficient links with outstanding schools to develop their skills further. They have good knowledge of the subject they teach and of their students' needs and aptitudes, and plan for good progress. They expect students to work hard and achieve well, and foster positive relationships that are conducive to learning. Lessons are prepared well and conducted at a pace that enables students to cover a good amount of work. Teachers use questioning and provide tasks that challenge students well and so students apply effort and deepen their understanding. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively to support students' learning and sustain their interest. Teachers check frequently on students' learning during lessons and use their observations to reshape explanations and dispel misconceptions, and to support and extend individuals. Homework is given regularly and builds on students' learning. Most teachers make consistent links between the Islamic and the more academic strands of the curriculum, and many give students opportunities to extend their speaking and writing skills. Outstanding teaching is characterised by excellent use of assessment, which enables students to make outstanding progress. Where teaching is only adequate it is because marking is not always regular, demands to complete unfinished work are not followed up, and expectations of students' presentation of work are insufficiently high.

Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection. Half-termly assessments enable teachers to monitor students' progress in National Curriculum subjects and compare students' performance with national norms. Teachers use the information from assessments to set improvement targets for students. However, these targets are not always formulated in a way that shows students exactly what to do to achieve them and they are not used consistently in lessons to raise standards further. Consequently, students make good, rather than outstanding, progress. While some comments on students' work give clear guidance on how to improve, this practice is not consistent and students do not always act on this guidance. In the Islamic curriculum, assessment procedures are undergoing a good level of refinement aimed at tracking students' progress even more accurately than now. Parents and carers feel well informed of their sons' progress.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good in that it is well balanced between National Curriculum and Islamic subjects and serves the needs of all students well. Its breadth encompasses most National Curriculum subjects and a wide range of Islamic sciences, equipping students with a wide knowledge base and a broad range of skills. Students may take up to 11 subjects at GCSE level. The curriculum is planned very effectively to enable students to make good progress, and long- and medium-term plans are reviewed annually. The school places a high emphasis on developing students' speaking skills, which support the development of their writing skills very effectively. Students have opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics, but not consistently, because these areas of the curriculum are not monitored sufficiently closely, as recognised by the school. The provision for PE is strong and enhanced by participation in local sports competitions. The creative and aesthetic areas of learning have

developed to include art and media studies and students have recently learnt to make film trailers. The Islamic curriculum has broadened since the last inspection to provide two distinct pathways: an *imamat* course, which prepares students to lead congregational prayers and fulfil public religious functions such as marriages and funerals competently, and an *alim* course for those students who aspire to become Islamic scholars. PSHCE permeates the whole curriculum and fosters students' personal development extremely well. Students' leadership skills are developed very effectively by encouraging the students to initiate their own youth projects and learn how to apply for funding to support them. Students' leadership, team work, social and creative skills are extended through a wealth of youth activities supported by the school during term and holiday time. Students are helped to make informed choices about their future through a well-structured careers education programme and work experience. The curriculum is enhanced adequately by a range of educational visits that supports most, but not all, areas of the curriculum. Extra-curricular activities extend students' physical, technological, creative and linguistic skills effectively.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The school makes good provision for students' welfare, health and safety and teachers provide excellent pastoral care. Students thrive in a caring environment where they are known as individuals. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and taught how to keep safe through the curriculum and through the school's strong partnership with officers from the public services. Safety education includes e-safety and safety in the community. The school can demonstrate that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All the staff receive the appropriate level of training in child protection and the headteacher has had training in safer recruitment. All the staff who work at the school have been properly vetted and all the required checks are recorded in a single central register. All the essential policies for safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour, health and safety, fire safety and first aid are up to date and are implemented consistently. Supervision is vigilant. Students respond well to the very high standards of behaviour set by the school and to the well-structured reward system. The school does not hesitate to apply serious sanctions when required. Consequently, students feel safe, and they and their parents and carers trust teachers to deal with any concern effectively. There is a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid. All the regulatory fire safety checks are carried out and recorded diligently and portable electrical appliances are checked annually. Accidents are recorded carefully. The school carries out appropriate risk assessments for the premises, fire safety and on-site and off-site activities. Registers are maintained well. The school monitors attendance and punctuality very closely, and has successfully reduced the proportion of unauthorised absence since the last inspection.

Leadership and management

Good

The leadership and management of the school are good and ensure that students achieve well. The trustees, senior leaders and staff share the same vision to raise students' achievement to outstanding. Teaching, the curriculum and students' welfare, health and safety are good as a result of effective monitoring, and students make good progress. Teachers create a very positive ethos which, combined with outstanding provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, promotes students' outstanding behaviour and personal development. The school evaluates its strengths and priorities for development accurately and further improvements are planned effectively. All of the regulations for independent schools but one are met. The premises have expanded in the last few years to provide more effective teaching accommodation. New plans for further extension and provision of showers have received planning permission and should be implemented as soon as possible so that the school can fully meet the standards for independent schools. Parents, carers and others receive all of the information to which they are entitled, including the complaints procedure. They express a high level of satisfaction with the school.

A little more work is required to help students to achieve outstandingly well. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not sufficiently linked to accelerating students' progress, and teachers do not always receive sufficiently clear written feedback about their work, follow-up observations

and targeted professional development. This is necessary to raise teaching and achievement from good to outstanding and to lift a small minority of teaching from adequate to good. The trustees can demonstrate that they support and challenge the school effectively. However, they recognise that, between them, they do not have broad enough skills to challenge the school more robustly.

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

Unique reference number	132797
Inspection number	442987
DfE registration number	211/6390

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.

Type of school	Day Muslim secondary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Esha atul Islam Trust
Chair	Mr Abdul Jalil
Headteacher	Abdulhadi Mamon, Mawlana Thohur Uddin (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	7–10 March 2011 (by BSI)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,500
Telephone number	020 7265 9667
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