

Islamia Girls' School

129 Salusbury Road, London, NW6 6PE

Inspection dates 18–20 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	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

This is an outstanding school because

- Students consistently achieve GCSE examination results which are well above the national average across the complete range of subjects. Achievement is particularly high in mathematics, history and Arabic.
- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations and excellent subject knowledge. They plan interesting lessons which challenge and engage students of all groups and abilities so that they make rapid progress.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Students are welcoming, polite and respectful to each other, staff and visitors. They feel very safe and are very well cared for so that they develop into confident, articulate young women.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Since her appointment, the headteacher has continued to develop the proprietor's vision to further improve the school and raise standards even higher. She leads the school community with energy, drive and wisdom. The innovations introduced have had a strong impact on teaching and achievement.
- The range of subjects offered by the school is a real strength. It is constantly evolving with new subjects every year to provide the very best academic opportunities for the students.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school develops students' understanding of Islam extremely well. The school ensures that students are well equipped for, and can contribute to, life in modern Britain.

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 12 lessons or parts of lessons. Two observations were accompanied by senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made some shorter visits to lessons accompanied by the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, a trustee, teaching staff and students. Two groups of students talked to inspectors about their views of the school and the inspection team spoke informally to students at break and lunchtime, and around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including the school development plan, policies, assessment records, curriculum plans, teacher appraisal and professional development records, and the school committee minutes.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 18 responses to the online Parent View survey and also considered emails from parents and carers who wished to communicate directly with inspectors. A meeting was held with the elected parent representative on the school committee.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rory O'Doherty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Islamia Girls' High School is an Islamic selective secondary day school in the London Borough of Brent. It is part of the Yusuf Islam Foundation and is one of two schools owned by the proprietor, the other being a boys' secondary school. The Yusuf Islam Foundation also appoints foundation governors to the governing body of Islamia primary school.
- The school was founded in 1989. It is located on the first and second floor of a building shared with Islamia primary school. The building is a purpose-built Victorian school building and shares the playground and a temporary dining space with the primary school.
- The school is registered for students from Year 7 to Year 11. There are currently 152 full-time students. The school is expanding and now has one tutor group in Year 11 and two tutor groups in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. At present, very few pupils have specific learning difficulties and none has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has a headteacher and assistant headteacher. There are no subject leaders.
- This is an Islamic school. Its mission statement is 'to strive to provide the best education in a secure Islamic environment through the knowledge and application of the Qur'an and Sunnah'. The school aims to 'give students a strong sense of identity as Muslim women and to provide them with an understanding of Islam that prepares them to excel in higher education and contribute to the wider world'.
- The school was last inspected under a light-touch inspection in February 2009 when it met all the regulations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen communication with parents and carers so that they have a better understanding of the aims of the school and are more able to support their daughters' learning and progress.
- Sustain the outstanding outcomes for students' personal development by systematically reviewing the opportunities offered as the curriculum changes.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Outstanding

- Students join the school with average or above-average standards of attainment. As a result of outstanding teaching and an excellent range of subjects, students make rapid progress.
- The achievement of all students is very high compared with national averages, by the time they leave school. This is across all subjects and for students of all abilities. Students with special educational needs achieve in line with other students.
- The proportion of students achieving the English baccalaureate to prepare them for further academic study is much higher than the national profile.
- Students make very good progress in English. Lively, expert teaching and the range of extra-curricular opportunities have a strong impact on students' achievement to ensure that their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are highly developed. The quality of written work in all year groups is exceptional. Inspectors were struck by the eloquence of students speaking and in their contribution to discussion in lessons. Students say how much they enjoy the creative writing and drama opportunities offered in English and how this helps them to learn.
- Achievement in mathematics is exceptionally high. Almost all students achieve rates of progress which are greater than that expected of students nationally. They achieve well because of the teaching approaches adopted and the support provided when students fall behind. Students are confident in applying their mathematical knowledge and problem-solving skills. They enjoy being set the challenge of developing their own formulae and methods.
- Students achieve well in all other subjects. In 2013, in information and communication technology (ICT), French, physics and Arabic, over three quarters of students achieved A/A* grades at GCSE. In history, all students achieved the highest grades.
- Reading has a high profile in the school. The library is used well and there are also many opportunities for students to read in lessons, including their own writing to the class or in small groups. Teachers model reading very well in lessons and the range of extra-curricular opportunities such as theatre visits encourage students to read a wide range of texts.
- The school has very high aspirations for the students. Their achievement at GCSE, and their excellent communication and mathematical skills, ensure that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The careers information programme through tutor periods, visits to universities and speakers from a range of professions complement the school curriculum so that all girls can secure places in school sixth forms or colleges of their choice. Many former students maintain links with the school during and after university and help to maintain the culture of high aspiration.

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding in all subjects. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and very high expectations of the students. As a result, they create an environment for learning which has a very positive impact on students' learning and achievement.
- Students learn very well in religious studies and Qur'anic studies. They deepen their understanding of Islam through learning the Qur'an and finding out about other world religions.
- Teachers plan interesting and stimulating activities so that students can learn well. For example, they use a range of resources to engage and motivate students. In a Year 9 history lesson, students listened to a sound track of the bombing of London during the blitz with their eyes shut so that they could empathise with the experience. This totally captured their imagination and challenged them to extend their understanding of historical sources related to the Second World War.
- Teachers use approaches such as new technology very well to ensure high-quality learning. In a Year 10 French lesson, the teacher encouraged students to use the interactive whiteboard to explain their answers in French rather than English. In an ICT lesson, students were extremely

confident in using a range of search engines to find information and compare costs for a school trip. Outstanding teaching over time has ensured that students can use ICT very effectively as a tool to support their learning.

- Teachers skilfully question students to assess their understanding. The school has focused on this aspect of teaching in its school development plan and the outcomes of training are clearly evident in the classroom. Teachers use a range of directed questions to individual students and adjust their lesson in response to students' answers to make sure that any misconceptions are corrected.
- Activities move along quickly so that students' learning is consolidated securely and they can progress rapidly to the next stage. Activities give students many opportunities to reflect on and explain their work. For example, in a personal and social education (PSE) lesson, students worked in groups to analyse a video clip of a speech made by a school council candidate. As a whole class, they considered the role of a school council representative and then developed their own one-minute speech for the coming elections.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to students' learning. They are well qualified and effectively deployed to provide support for individual students and small groups.
- Students appreciate the feedback on their work. Teachers' marking is regular and thorough, and almost all teachers provide students with clear guidance and targets about how to improve. Increasingly, students are using this as a model for how they assess each other's work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- Students' behaviour is excellent around the school. Students show courtesy and good manners, and are welcoming and respectful to visitors, staff and each other. They take care of their learning environment and are very appreciative of the quality of their facilities. One student said, 'This school is always improving!'
- There are very strong relationships between students and staff, and a shared love of learning, which contribute to students' outstanding attitudes and behaviour in lessons.
- The school has a clear code of conduct displayed around the school. Students understand the sanctions and appreciate the reward systems.
- Many students described the school as a community and being like a family. Students are very supportive of each other, and they are clear that they feel very safe and cared for in school. Parents and carers are unanimous in agreeing that their daughters feel safe in school. The level of care for students is very high. The school meets the regulations for safeguarding.
- Bullying is very rare, but students know what to do if it happens, and are confident that there is always someone they can talk to. They are very knowledgeable about internet bullying and know how to keep themselves safe. The school dealt with a rare instance of cyber-bullying in an exemplary manner, and so students feel very safe and confident as a result. Students say there is no homophobic or racist bullying in school.
- Student leadership is very well developed, and prefects and school council members are all elected by students themselves. The school participates in Brent Youth Parliament. The house system provides further opportunities for students to develop leadership skills through a range of competitions and cultural events. They raise a considerable amount of money for charity each year.
- Since the last inspection, the school has worked diligently to improve student attendance, which, as a result, is now above the national average.
- The school's programme for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The headteacher is clear that the students are citizens of this country, it is theirs and they have to support it and take their part in society. As a result, students are highly articulate and spoke at length, and with great eloquence, to inspectors about their views of growing up as young Muslim women in Great Britain today. They are confident in holding their own religious faith, while being tolerant of others' choices. One student said, 'We respect your choices, each to his own.' They are very aware of diversity and understand how the school

encourages them to engage with the local community. They described their regular visits to a local care home and what they had learnt from the experience.

- School leaders ensure that when political views are considered, steps are taken to offer a balance of views. The school visits the Houses of Parliament and the law courts, and has invited Members of Parliament and representatives of groups such as Amnesty International to speak to students.

Leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the continuing development of the school in line with the aims of the Foundation. She has set about the task with energy and determination, and has created a well-thought-out plan of action. She has brought a range of educational experience, and the benefits of this can now be seen in school.
- The senior leaders work very closely with the proprietors. The headteacher has weekly meetings with one of the trustees and termly meetings with the proprietors. They scrutinise data on student performance and the quality of teaching, and are robust in their challenge to the school's senior leaders. All the regulations for independent schools are met.
- Staff are very well qualified, and have high expectations for themselves and their students. They are committed to high-quality teaching and achievement, and act as role models for the students. Staff who responded to the survey are unanimously proud to work at the school.
- The building, although old, is being constantly upgraded on a rolling programme so that some areas such as the science laboratories have 'state of the art' facilities. The school provides a very high-quality learning environment which has a significant impact on students' achievement. The premises are well maintained.
- Senior leaders have developed very effective systems for managing the performance of teachers. Lesson observations are undertaken by senior leaders and a peer observation programme for teachers enables them to learn from each other and share outstanding practice. Senior leaders have set an expectation that all teachers should achieve qualified teacher status and supported them to attain this goal. The proprietors and the headteacher are effective in holding teachers to account for any underperformance.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. New GCSE courses have been added to option choices such as business studies and food technology. A GCSE course in physical education is planned for next year. The range of subjects is kept constantly under review and, together with the extra-curricular events, clubs, visits and a residential trip, it provides an excellent foundation for achieving the school's aims.
- Systems for checking students' progress have been introduced. Staff are very positive about the data systems and how they successfully contribute to students' progress rates. They use the information gathered to plan lessons and identify when any students need additional help. Students know their targets and understand the high aspirations the school has for them. They are challenged to improve by a grade or level every year, and they respond with determination and enthusiasm.
- The curriculum, the systems for checking students' progress, and high levels of care and support ensure equal opportunities for all students to do very well.
- A few parents who contacted inspectors had some reservations about decisions taken by the school's leaders. However, inspectors found no evidence to endorse these concerns. On the contrary, they found decisions and actions taken by the school leadership to be appropriate and robust. All the required information for parents and carers is provided, including a complaints policy. However, school leaders agree that there is more they can do to communicate the message of the school's vision and aims.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	101575
Inspection number	443492
DfE registration number	304/6069

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 secondary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Fawziah Islam
Headteacher	Sdaqat Jabeen
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2009
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,700
Telephone number	020 7372 3472
Fax number	020 7604 4061
Email address	secretary@islamiaschools.com

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

