# Palfrey Girls School

72 Queen Mary Street, Palfrey, Walsall, WS1 4AB



Inspection dates	29 September – 1 October 2015
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

#### This is an inadequate school

- standards as its arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements.
- Senior leaders and trustees do not ensure pupils are kept safe because they do not follow the necessary steps to make sure pupils are secure when they are missing from school. Leaders have not carried out 'disqualification by association' checks on staff.
- Outcomes are inadequate because pupils currently at the school are not making the progress of which they are capable, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is inadequate. Teachers do not routinely use what they know about pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to plan lessons that meet the needs and abilities of pupils.
- Pupils in the primary phase do not have sufficient opportunities to study different faiths and religions.

#### The school has the following strengths

- The Principal has a clear vision for the school to provide an education that embraces the Muslim faith while ensuring pupils are ready to play a positive role in building a more cohesive society both nationally and globally.
- Pupils behave well, they value their school and their attendance is above average.

#### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- The school does not meet the independent school
  School leaders and trustees do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of education in the school or of pupils' progress. Their checks on the school's work are ineffective.
  - A majority of teachers in the primary and early years phase do not have the necessary knowledge, skills or experience to ensure pupils make rapid progress. Training to improve their performance has been ineffective.
  - The early years setting is inadequate as the school's safeguarding arrangements do not meet statutory requirements. The outdoor play area is too limited and the children do not have use of appropriate facilities to encourage their physical development.
  - Leaders have identified where improvements are needed, but recent actions have not yet had the intended impact on the quality of learning and teaching and pupils' progress, personal development and welfare.
  - Pupils are polite, courteous and considerate to each other, to staff and to visitors. This reflects the school's ethos of tolerance, understanding and respect.
  - Many pupils have clear ideas for their future careers and are encouraged and supported to achieve their goals.
- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent) School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.



## Full report

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

- Immediately improve the safeguarding arrangements for pupils by:
  - making sure that safeguarding policies and practice meet statutory requirements, the independent school standards and the statutory requirements for the early years
  - making sure that rigorous and appropriate steps are taken to stringently follow up when children are missing from school
  - carrying out the required 'disqualification by association' checks on staff
  - implementing a policy, and procedures, for administering medicines to children in the early years.
- Improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, accelerate pupils' progress in all year groups by making sure that:
  - schemes of work (teachers' expectations of what pupils should learn in all subjects) and teachers'
    planning take into account the ages, abilities and needs of all pupils
  - teachers know how well pupils are doing and match pupils' learning activities closely to their specific needs, particularly for the most and least able pupils
  - feedback and guidance given by teachers consistently helps pupils to improve their work
  - pupils take pride in their work and ensure that it is well presented, neat and tidy
  - teachers improve pupils' writing skills by securing rapid improvement in their spelling, punctuation and grammar, both in English lessons and across other subjects
  - teachers improve pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding by giving them opportunities to reason mathematically, solve problems and to go into greater depth in each topic, both in mathematics lessons and in other relevant subjects
  - pupils in the early years and primary phases use their phonics skills (the sounds letters make) to improve their reading, writing and understanding of what they have read
  - pupils have the necessary skills to overcome problems and difficulties with their work
  - pupils in the primary phase have the necessary technological skills to access the Key Stage 3 computing curriculum
  - pupils in the primary phase have sufficient opportunities to study a range of different faiths, beliefs and religions
  - pupils have access to a suitable range of good-quality resources that support their learning
  - children in the early years have access to opportunities for stimulating outdoor play that develops their coordination, control and movement.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - increasing the checks on the implementation of the curriculum, the quality of teaching, pupils' learning, behaviour, attendance, and pupils' safety, so that the proprietor and school leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
  - making sure that the information produced by the checks on the school's work is carefully analysed to inform strategic plans that drive rapid improvement
  - providing trustees with information about all aspects of the provision and outcomes for pupils
  - making sure staff have the skills necessary to teach and assess pupils' progress effectively, particularly in the primary phase
  - making sure teachers and leaders are held to account for pupils' performance and improving the work of the school
  - making sure agreed policies and procedures are followed by all staff
  - making sure that statutory policies are published on the school's website or made available to parents on request



- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
  - The proprietor must ensure that there is a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which is implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1)).
  - The proprietor must ensure that the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an education, health and care plan (EHC) (paragraph 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i))
  - Teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3, 3(a)).
  - Teaching at the school fosters pupils' self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 3, 3(b)).
  - Teaching at the school involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (paragraph 3, 3(c)).
  - Teaching at the school shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3, 3(d)).
  - Teaching at the school demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught (paragraph 3, 3(e)).
  - Teaching at the school utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range (paragraph 3, 3(f)).
  - Teaching at the school demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use[s] information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make good progress (paragraph 3, 3(g)).
  - The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
  - The proprietor must ensure that no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction (paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(b)).
  - The proprietor must ensure that a register is kept that records the disqualification checks made on staff appointed to the school on or after 1 May 2007 (paragraph 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a) and 21(3)(a)(iii)).
  - The proprietor must ensure that particulars of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request (paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)).
  - The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a)).
  - The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(b)).
  - The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(c)).
- The school must meet the following statutory requirement for the early years.
  - Providers must have, and implement, a policy and procedures to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (paragraph 3.4)
  - Providers must ensure that no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 or section 142 of the Education Act 2002, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction (paragraph 3.14)



 Providers must have, and implement, a policy and procedures for administering medicines. It must include systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medicines, and for keeping this information up to date (paragraph 3.45)

## Inspection judgements

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The proprietor and school leaders have not made sure that pupils are as safe and secure as possible or that the quality of teaching enables pupils to make the progress expected of them. As a result, a number of the independent school standards are unmet.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policies do not meet current statutory requirements. As a consequence, the school's practices do not always make sure that children are safe. For example, the school does not follow rigorous and appropriate procedures when pupils are missing from school or have taken extended family holidays. In addition, school leaders have not carried out 'disqualification by association' checks on staff.
- Arrangements for checking the work of teachers and leaders are infrequent and lack rigour. As a consequence, the Principal and trustees do not have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Neither have they used these checks effectively to improve the quality of teaching and assessment.
- The systems for managing teachers' performance are inadequate. Staff are not held to account for the progress of the pupils in their classes or for the effectiveness of their leadership. Staff training needs are not identified. As a result, the performance of teachers and leaders is not improving.
- The curriculum is not effective because the match of the work to individual pupils' ability is too variable across the school. In mathematics, pupils are not prepared for the GCSE examination or the next stage of their learning as they have insufficient opportunities to reason mathematically, to solve problems or to apply their mathematical skills and understanding in different subjects. In writing, pupils' progress is inhibited because pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their ability to write longer pieces of work. In addition, teachers across the school do not consistently correct pupils' mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In the primary classes, teachers do not make sure that pupils have confident computing and technical skills in order to use a range of equipment and software packages. Pupils in the primary phase have insufficient opportunities to study different faiths and religions. However, British values are actively promoted through other areas of the curriculum and enrichment activities.
- The Principal has recently put in place a number of policies and strategies to improve the work of staff. For example, a new marking and feedback policy has been introduced. However, not all staff consistently apply the policies and as a result pupils' progress across the school is inconsistent.
- Leaders with responsibility for the primary phase are beginning to develop an accurate understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. They have begun to put in place appropriate plans for improvement. However, it is too early to judge how well these plans are working.
- The arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are effective. The Principal knows what he wants to achieve and has a clear vision based on Muslim beliefs and values. This vision permeates the life of the school, from the school's website to how the pupils behave and interact with the community.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors were clear about their role in modern Britain and their responsibility to promote and contribute to an inclusive and cohesive society. Secondary pupils in particular talked eloquently about British public institutions such as the police, army and judiciary. School leaders have arranged school council elections and make sure all pupils are taught about the democratic process. As a result, pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of democracy and its importance in protecting the rights and freedom of the individual.
- Through their actions, pupils demonstrate respect and courtesy and show that they know right from wrong. Secondary pupils receive appropriate impartial careers information, advice and guidance which is effective in raising their aspirations. Almost all of the pupils who spoke to inspectors talked about their desire to enter further or higher education, training or employment. Information provided by the school shows that almost all pupils go on to further education, employment or training and a significant number have entered law, the health service and other professional careers.



#### ■ The governance of the school

- The governance of the school is inadequate. The trustees have not established arrangements or been given sufficient information in order to hold teachers and leaders to account. They do not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not ensured all the independent school standards are met.
- Trustees do not ensure proper recruitment procedures are followed thoroughly when appointing staff, or that safeguarding policies and practices meet national requirements. The trustees have recognised the need to gain additional expertise. They have recently appointed consultants and contacted the local authority to support them in their role. The impact of this work is not evident as yet.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The school's policies and practices do not meet statutory requirements, and pupils are not always kept safe and secure.

#### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because teachers do not assess pupils' progress accurately. They have not identified consistently what pupils already know and can do. Teachers do not consider carefully enough what it is they want pupils to learn. The learning activities are not always appropriate for the pupils' ages and aptitudes. As a result, pupils do not make the progress expected of them, particularly in English and mathematics across the school, and computing in the primary phase.
- Teachers do not mark pupils' work thoroughly or provide sufficient guidance on how work can be improved. Pupils' learning and progress is not checked often enough during the lesson. As a result, misconceptions and mistakes are not identified quickly and pupils often repeat the same mistakes, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- The work in pupils' books is sometimes untidy and incomplete because teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- The most-able and less-able pupils make inadequate progress because the work does not match their abilities or needs. Teachers often pitch the lesson at the middle of the group. As a result, the most-able pupils often find the work too easy and less-able pupils find the work too hard. Pupils respond enthusiastically where the work challenges, interests and extends them. Regrettably, this level of effective teaching is not evident throughout the school.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to reason mathematically, solve increasingly difficult problems or to deepen their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. The work set for the most-able pupils fails to provide challenge or interest. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in subjects other than in mathematics.
- Basic writing skills are not well taught. As a result of ineffective teaching, pupils frequently make spelling mistakes and do not use punctuation and grammar correctly. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their writing and reading skills and rarely correct their spelling mistakes in subjects other than English.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is used to help pupils read new and unfamiliar words. However, teachers do not ensure that the use of phonics enables pupils to understand what they have read or improve the quality of their writing.

#### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

#### is inadequate

#### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- A significant minority of pupils are overly reliant on their teacher to guide their learning. They do not have the necessary learning skills, such as resilience, perseverance or self-awareness to be able to take control of their learning. As a result, they can become distracted when the work is too easy or too hard.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are inadequate and they are ineffective in ensuring pupils' welfare is assured.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is inconsistent. Older pupils in the secondary phase are clear about how to keep themselves safe on, for example, social media sites and while using mobile phones. Primary pupils have a secure understanding of road safety and 'stranger danger' while outdoors. However, they are not sure about how they would identify someone who poses a potential risk while using the internet.

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- Almost all pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Parents who spoke with inspectors agree. Pupils' social skills are well developed. They are courteous, friendly and welcoming. They show respect for their teachers and other staff. Pupils were polite, kind and considerate to inspectors, frequently opening doors and asking if they could be of assistance.
- Pupils' well-mannered and civil approach promotes a calm and purposeful atmosphere in school. Bullying is rare and quickly dealt with by staff. Boys and girls and pupils of different ages mix socially and get on well together. During this inspection, older pupils were often seen helping younger ones.
- Pupils and staff have participated in fundraising for worthy causes such as 'Comic Relief' and 'Water Aid'. Pupils have visited elderly members of the community to provide company and to celebrate the festivals of different religions.

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good in and out of lessons. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils' attendance is above national figures, and pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils are punctual to school in the morning and to lessons after break and lunchtime, and are ready to learn quickly. Persistent absence (pupils missing 15% or more of lessons) is below national figures.
- Pupils are clearly proud of their school. They wear their uniform with pride. They take care of the school's facilities and resources.

#### **Outcomes for pupils**

#### are inadequate

- Pupils' outcomes are inadequate because of the shortcomings in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the curriculum. The progress of pupils across the school is inadequate. The most able and least able do not make the progress expected of them because the work is often too easy or too hard.
- Leaders are unable to accurately assess pupils' progress because they do not accurately measure what pupils know and can do when they join the school. Leaders do not track, monitor or evaluate pupils' progress as they move from year to year or between key stages.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in English and mathematics and a small minority are not ready for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- The numbers of pupils in each year group who are disadvantaged, disabled or have special educational needs are too small for a viable comparison to be made with their classmates or other pupils nationally. However, teachers are slow to identify where pupils may have special educational needs. As a result, their needs are not met and they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' physical skills are underdeveloped as teachers do not have the necessary knowledge, skills or expertise to deliver effective physical education lessons. The outdoor play area in the early years does not allow children to develop their coordination, control and movement, and they are provided with no other means to develop these skills.
- Provisional GCSE examination results show that pupils' attainment and progress improved at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2015 compared to 2014. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including in English and mathematics is above the 2014 national figure.

#### **Early years provision**

#### is inadequate

- The policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection are not up to date. They do not comply with current requirements and, as a result, leaders cannot guarantee that children are kept safe. In addition, the full range of checks that should be made on staff before they begin to work with children are not made.
- Leaders are not able to check if children are making enough progress because they do not assess the children's skills and abilities when they arrive at school. While assessments are made at the end of the Reception Year to check what the children have achieved, these cannot be used to see if children have progressed well from where they started. Not all children are well prepared to begin Year 1. This is because teaching is inadequate.
- The leaders of the early years, who are new to post, have an accurate view of the weaknesses of the

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provision and have begun to take action to make improvements. It is too soon to see the impact of their work.

- The assessment information from the end of the Reception Year is not used effectively when the children move into Year 1. Teachers do not use this information to set work at the right level and children repeat work that they already understand and can do, which hinders their later progress.
- Children do not have access to a broad enough range of resources in order to help them to learn effectively, both in the indoor and outdoor learning spaces. The opportunities that children have to develop in the seven required areas of learning are too narrow. Provision for the development of physical skills and the acquisition of knowledge and understanding about technology is particularly weak.
- The activities that are made available to children do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to deepen their learning. Adults do not maximise opportunities to get involved in children's play and extend their thinking. Adults do not ask well-thought-out and effective questions. This is because they do not fully understand how to promote children's learning and development.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors are positive about the information that they receive prior to their children starting school. Parents contribute to the record of the children's work in their 'learning journeys' at the beginning of the year, but they have too little input into their children's learning throughout the Reception Year.
- Children settle quickly into school life and establish positive relationships quickly. The inspection took place early in the school year and children were already able to demonstrate an understanding of the routines, played happily together and behaved well. In addition, they were confident to speak to the inspector who visited their lessons, demonstrating that they feel safe and secure.



## School details

Unique reference number	104267
Inspection number	10007690
DfE registration number	335/6008

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Muslim faith school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Proprietor	Mr Lorgat
Chair	Mr Lorgat
Principal	Mr M Sacha
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1500 (secondary) £1050 (primary)
Telephone number	01922 62 5510
Website	www.palfreygirlsschool.org
Email address	admin@palfreygirlsschool.org
Date of previous inspection	15–18 October 2012

## Information about this school

- Palfrey Girls School is an independent Muslim day school for pupils aged between four and 16 years. The primary phase, including the Reception Year, admits both boys and girls. The secondary phase admits only girls.
- The school opened in October 1993 and is housed in a former old people's home. The school is registered for 242 pupils. There are 165 pupils on roll in Years 7 to 11. There are seven children in the Reception Year and 65 pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- Children in the early years attend on a full-time basis.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement or education, health and care plan, is well below national figures. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has not been established. There are no pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- All pupils are British and of Asian origin. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision. The school does not run any off-site units.
- The school offers secular and Islamic education.
- The school is governed by a board of trustees.
- The school's vision, values and aims include: 'We aim to develop our students to fulfil their potential intellectually, socially, economically, and culturally to demonstrate to themselves, their families and the wider community that social deprivation, gender or ethnicity need be no barrier to the highest levels of achievement ... in which tolerance and understanding of other values and beliefs is at the heart of our ethos to equip our students to play a vital role in building a more cohesive society both nationally and globally'.
- The school's previous inspection was a 'material change' inspection in October 2012.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in a number of lessons across the school in a range of subjects taught by several teachers. Four lessons were jointly observed with members of the leadership team. The work in pupils' books was evaluated during observations.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed throughout the school day.
- Discussions took place with the proprietor, the Principal, teachers, parents and pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Questionnaires completed by 26 teachers were considered. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View for these to be taken into account.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, school improvement plans, work in pupils' books, safeguarding and child protection documents, including the checks made on staff. Other documents were examined to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards and to provide other inspection evidence.

#### **Inspection team**

Peter Humphries, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Howie	Her Majesty's Inspector

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