

Ghausia Girls' High School

1–3 Cross Street, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 7EN

Inspection dates

30 September – 2 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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils' outcomes are inadequate. Leaders' and teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are low. Too few pupils reach the highest standards by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The leaders' view of the school is not accurate. Leaders' own evaluation of the impact of their work is not linked precisely to pupils' outcomes.
- Improvement planning is inadequate because it lacks detail and does not identify how success will be measured. Governors do not hold leaders and teachers to account rigorously about pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not plan for lessons effectively. They do not use their understanding of pupils' previous learning to set tasks or targets which challenge all pupils adequately.
- The continuing professional development of teachers is not given a high enough priority by leaders at all levels.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is weak. This has resulted in too few pupils attaining the highest grades. Pupils are not being prepared well enough for a life in modern Britain because they do not achieve qualifications to enable them to fulfil their potential.
- Pupils do not develop their reading and writing skills sufficiently well as they progress through the school. They are not encouraged effectively to read widely and often.
- Feedback to pupils on how well they have done or how they can improve their work is inadequate. The most-able pupils are rarely provided with work designed to deepen their understanding of a subject.
- There are several unmet independent school standards.
- The school's safeguarding policy does not give an effective framework for action when safeguarding concerns are identified. Two of the school's emergency fire exit routes are inadequate.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are successful in promoting fundamental British values including tolerance and respect for those of other cultures while ensuring that principles of the Muslim faith remain at the core of school life.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is at the heart of everything the school does. Pupils' personal development is strong.
- Pupils' behaviour, along with their attitudes to learning, is a strength of the school. Pupils are eager to learn and their attendance is high.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong. Pupils respond positively to teachers' requests and instructions.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the world beyond school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents feel well informed about the work of the school. Those parents spoken to feel that their daughters are safe in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the safety of pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils are able to exit, quickly and safely, the second-floor classrooms in the event of a fire on the first-floor landing
 - all fire doors open in the direction of escape
 - the school's safeguarding policy meets requirements, is ratified by governors and is put into operation by well-trained staff.

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, governors and the proprietor by ensuring that:
 - leaders evaluate all aspects of the school's work thoroughly and where possible in relation to the impact on pupils' outcomes
 - detailed improvement plans link closely to leaders' self-evaluation and the identified areas for improvement
 - improvement plans have robust targets which can be used by leaders and governors to monitor and evaluate their implementation rigorously and effectively
 - the introduction of a suitable performance management process which is linked effectively to teachers' continuing professional development and their impact on pupils' progress
 - leaders introduce a systematic approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and the accuracy and use of assessment to inform teachers' planning
 - leaders at all levels benefit from the sharing of good and outstanding practice in other similar schools
 - governors have an independent view of the school's progress so that they can evaluate the work of leaders for themselves
 - leaders draw up an implement an effective written risk assessment policy
 - the proprietor commissions an independent review of governance to assess how this aspect of leadership can be improved.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to raise standards and therefore equip pupils to participate fully in life in modern Britain by ensuring that:
 - teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are accurate and are used to identify strengths and gaps in pupils' learning
 - teachers plan effectively to meet the specific needs of pupils based on their accurate assessment of pupils' progress
 - leaders strengthen the teaching of English and mathematics across the school
 - teachers increase the opportunities for pupils to read often and widely and for them to write at length in a variety of contexts
 - teachers' feedback to pupils is frequent, precise and has a direct impact on improvements in pupils' work
 - teachers, and therefore their pupils, benefit from the sharing of good and outstanding practice in teaching in other schools.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The standard in this paragraph is met if:
 - the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively and
 - the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan (paragraphs 2, 2(1)(a) and 2(1)(b)(i)).
- For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are:
 - that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress and
 - effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society (paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(h) and 2(2)(i)).

- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the 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
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught
 - utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress
 - utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g) and 3(h)).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
 - The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005¹ (paragraph 12).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that:
 - the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and
 - appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).
- The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable pupils to play outside (paragraphs 29, 29(1) and 29(1)(b)).
- The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures 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
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

¹ S.I. 2005/1541, to which there are amendments not relevant to these Regulations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders do not ensure that the quality of teaching and the curriculum is of a standard which is good enough to ensure that pupils progress well. Standards are not monitored effectively enough and policies and plans do not provide a solid framework through which teachers can meet the specific needs of all pupils, including groups such as the most able. Consequently, too few pupils make rapid progress and too many do not reach the levels expected of them based on their starting points.
- Leaders' own evaluation of the school's progress is overgenerous because it is based on recording when tasks have been completed rather than evaluating the impact of actions on pupils' outcomes. Leaders have identified correctly a small number of priorities for improvement. However, plans to improve these areas are weak. The school's improvement plan does not identify precisely how objectives will be met, what measures will be used to evaluate success or a timescale for completion.
- Leaders do not analyse information about the performance of pupils in enough detail. Any evaluation of progress is confined to whole-school or year group outcomes. Although there are no groups of pupils identified as disadvantaged, leaders do not analyse specifically groups such as the most able or those at risk of falling behind. This means that leaders do not ensure that teachers challenge and support pupils effectively.
- Leaders' high aspirations for pupils' lives beyond school are not replicated as high expectations in the classroom and around school. Leaders do not enforce rigorously whole-school policies on feedback by teachers or on presentation in pupils' work books. Furthermore, the start to the day is not defined clearly because pupils arrive at school to begin the first lesson immediately. As a result, there are too many missed opportunities to capitalise on pupils' unrelenting desire to learn.
- Leaders', including middle leaders', capacity to improve is impaired by their lack of opportunity to benefit from the sharing of good practice with good or outstanding schools. For example, while leaders have put systems in place to improve the quality of teaching, feedback to teachers is weak because it does not focus sharply enough on pupils' learning to ensure that teachers improve their effectiveness. Teachers are not held to account successfully because the school's performance management system is not robust.
- The quality of teachers' professional development is patchy. Certificates of attendance and completion, displayed in the staff room, show that training in safeguarding matters, such as first aid and child protection, is adequate. However, leaders are unable to demonstrate the impact of other training on pupils' learning because records are not available and evaluation does not taken place.
- Leaders are beginning to gather information methodically about pupils' achievement. They have introduced a basic framework by which to record and evaluate pupils' progress towards their expected end of Key Stage 4 outcomes. However, prior to this inspection, leaders were over-reliant on commercial assessment tools which resulted in pupils' targets being set at too low a level. This contributed to too many pupils not attaining the GCSE grades of which they were capable, based on their end of Key Stage 2 performance.
- The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils do not meet statutory requirements. The school's safeguarding policy, published on the school's website, does not pay particular regard to the latest guidance given by the Department of Education nor does it give a clear framework for staff to use.
- The curriculum provides an adequate balance between academic and religious studies and meets the statutory requirements. A broad range of subjects and experiences contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and also to their personal development. However, weak planning by teachers does not support pupils to reach their potential and as a result they are not prepared as well as they could be for a life in modern Britain.
- Leaders are aware of the limitations caused by the school building but have taken some effective steps to limit the impact of the lack of facilities on learning. For example, the pupils visit a local community centre each week in order to take part in physical education activities such as tennis, badminton, martial arts and team sports.
- Leaders have ensured improvements in the attendance of pupils so that attendance is now above that of other schools nationally. Any absence by pupils is monitored closely and followed up meticulously through telephone calls or other forms of contact with parents. This action contributes effectively to keeping pupils safe.
- The school's communication with parents is a strength. The parents spoken to said that they are kept well informed about how well their daughters are progressing in school. Parents said they receive written reports at least twice each year and attend parents' evenings to discuss learning. All parents spoken to agreed that their daughters' self-confidence had improved since joining the school. Also, all of the parents

said that they were very happy with the balance between faith studies and academic studies in the school.

- Inspectors strongly recommend that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The proprietor and governors have a strong vision to ensure that pupils benefit from a life in modern Britain while maintaining their Muslim faith and links with their Muslim culture. This vision permeates throughout the work of the school and is a significant influence in pupils' strong personal development.
 - The governing body does not challenge leaders effectively enough to raise standards. Systems are not in place which would provide the information required by governors to hold leaders and teachers to account. Governors do not have an independent view of how well the school is progressing. The Chair of the Governing Body understands the school's most urgent improvement priorities but he does not have the expertise to ensure that these are met appropriately.
 - Governors do not have accurate information to check how well pupils are progressing because robust systems to monitor achievement are not in place. The system to manage teachers' performance, reward good teaching and tackle underperformance is not developed well enough to ensure that governors can act swiftly to eradicate weak teaching.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. Teachers do not make adaptations to their teaching for the specific needs of some pupils and tasks are often too simple for the most able. Teachers often do not link current learning to what pupils already know and this leads to a slow pace, particularly at the start of lessons.
- Teachers are not effective in their use of information they have about pupils' specific needs and abilities to inform their planning. Teachers do not assess the progress of pupils against national expectations frequently enough. Lessons are not well matched to the needs of pupils and as a result progress is often slow, particularly for the most able and those at risk of falling behind.
- Teachers' excellent relationships with pupils are not used sufficiently well to ensure that the most able are challenged frequently to think for themselves as a means of deepening their learning. For example, inspectors observed missed opportunities to stretch pupils' thinking by allowing pupils to discuss topics, such as cyber bullying, freely amongst themselves before giving feedback to the whole class.
- Opportunities for pupils to read widely are not structured well enough to ensure that all pupils develop good reading comprehension. Although the pupils listened to by inspectors had fluency in their reading, most did not have the strategies to determine the meaning of words or phrases. For example, a sample of pupils could not deduce from a word's place in the sentence what that word might mean. Leaders and teachers do not have an up-to-date record of pupils' reading abilities from which to take appropriate action.
- Basic skills, including pupils' ability to write at length, are not promoted effectively throughout the school. Teachers do not always set good role models for the promotion of good literacy skills. For example, one teacher did not use capital letters when writing examples of proper nouns on the whiteboard. Schemes of work and subject plans do not include additional opportunities to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in a range of contexts routinely.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils is ineffective in boosting pupils' progress. Teachers across the school do not follow a whole-school marking policy. This contributes to low expectations. The standard of pupils' presentation in their books is often poor and there is no expectation that pupils will always respond to teachers' comments on how to improve their work. In a small number of instances, pupils' work books had not been marked since the beginning of the academic year and so they did not have feedback on how to improve their skills.
- Teaching of science is a strength of the school. Inspectors' scrutiny of current pupils' work books demonstrates that pupils progress well through topics such as cells and the digestive system. Pupils' literacy skills are developed effectively in science because mistakes, such as the misspelling of key words, are identified and corrected by the teacher.
- Teachers' contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Subjects such as citizenship, Islamic studies and religious education are taught effectively to enable pupils to develop their understanding of how Islam and other religions contribute to life in modern Britain. Teachers

encourage tolerance and respect whenever possible, for example in media studies when discussing discrimination in advertising. As a result, pupils have high expectations for their next steps and none of those spoken to foresee barriers to their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Several of the independent school standards relating to the safety of pupils are not met. The school's recently redrafted safeguarding policy has not been ratified by the governing body. Furthermore, staff have not been trained in the implementation of the new policy. In addition, fire exit routes from the second and first floors do not allow quick and easy routes of escape in the case of an emergency.
- Pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils develop into well-rounded young women by the time they leave the school. They are self-confident and willing to talk with visitors about their work and aspirations. Key Stage 4 pupils spoken to have a strong sense of right and wrong and a thorough understanding of the judicial system.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they are certain that a teacher will always be there to speak to if they have concerns. Their parents support this view. Pupils are also confident that they know how to keep themselves safe beyond school. Pupils were able to describe to inspectors how, when a visitor talked to them about internet safety, pupils felt able to identify signs of grooming on the internet.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of impartial careers advice. Pupils visit local and regional careers fairs at sixth form colleges and universities. This action contributes well to the choices pupils make for their next steps beyond school. All Year 11 pupils who left the school last year have either entered one of several local colleges or begun apprenticeships.
- Pupils are aware of the need to maintain a healthy diet and active lifestyle. Pupils enjoy the weekly option to place their own healthy food order from a local food supplier. All pupils take part in a range of physical education activities and some have taken the opportunity to learn to ride a bicycle with a national cycle training scheme.
- Pupils of all ages are typified by their positive attitude towards their work and also by their willingness to contribute to their local community. Pupils have recently been involved in a range of charitable events, including a sponsored walk and providing food parcels for distribution by the Salvation Army.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance at and punctuality to lessons are good. Pupils generally have the right equipment for their lessons and are well prepared to learn because they complete any homework set on time.
- The pupils spoken to have high aspirations for future careers. All Year 11 pupils spoken to also have an appropriate pathway through further education and beyond in order to realise their goals.
- Leaders' own records of behaviour incidents show that misdemeanours are few and far between. Pupils spoken to were unable to recall any bullying incidents. However, they were adamant that when the occasional 'fall out' occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively, usually involving mediation between pupils.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is unquestionably positive. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' requests and instructions and no time is wasted due to low-level disruption. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is not outstanding because teachers do not give pupils enough time or freedom to discuss, debate, explore and investigate in their learning.
- Parents spoken to agree that pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Some parents pointed out that their daughters' behaviour had improved since joining the school because they had grown in confidence.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- From their starting points pupils make inadequate progress and do not reach the standards they ought to. Typically, the most-able and the lower-attaining pupils, across all year groups, do not make enough progress. In the past two years the large majority of pupils have underachieved in mathematics and/or English at GCSE level.
- Leaders' information about pupils' progress is patchy and not analysed sufficiently well to give a detailed

evaluation of the progress of groups. However, inspectors' observations during lessons, information gathered listening to pupils read, the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning in a range of subjects demonstrate that the progress of current pupils is not improving rapidly.

- No groups of pupils are challenged successfully to make progress which is in line with other pupils nationally. Teachers' plans do not include sufficient pace to promote learning which is rapid and sustained. For example, in English, plans show that Year 8 pupils will spend a whole term on work centred on one short novel, thus missing opportunities to broaden pupils' repertoire of reading. In art, pupils in Year 9 have followed the same Islamic art topic as those in Year 7, with no additional creativity or depth to their learning.
- Pupils' progress in science is adequate. Pupils show an added interest in science because teachers' planning is matched closely to their specific needs. As a result, more pupils gained A*–C grades at GCSE level in science in the past two years than did in other subjects.
- Leaders do not analyse progress information in enough detail to judge how effectively the school closes the gaps in learning between groups of pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	131337
Inspection number	10007535
DfE registration number	6033

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	Independent
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Proprietor	Mr Amwar Afzal
Chair	Mr Ameer Saeed
Headteacher	Mrs Shabana Riaz and Mrs Aneela Masood
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,250
Telephone number	01282 699214
Website	www.gghs-nelson.co.uk
Email address	s-riaz@hotmail.co.uk
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected by Ofsted

Information about this school

- Ghausia Girls' High School is an independent school registered for girls between 11 and 16. There are currently 39 girls on roll.
- The vast majority of pupils join the school at the beginning of Year 7 and do so from a number of local independent and maintained primary schools.
- Ghausia Girls' High School is located in a predominantly Muslim community of Nelson. The school is sited in a number of former residential properties.
- The school has operated since 1996.
- The aims of the school revolve around a need to provide an Islamic education, which is all relevant to the modern world, as a result providing learners with the necessary skills to adapt and adjust to society.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspectors observed several part-lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteachers.
- The inspectors observed all aspects of the school's work.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work and at the school's records of their progress.
- The inspectors held meetings with, senior leaders, staff, pupils, parents and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school.
- The inspectors checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Drew Crawshaw, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Shirley Gornall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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