

# Islamia Girls High School

2 Thornton Lodge Hall, Thornton Lodge Road, Thornton Lodge, Huddersfield HD1 3JP

## Inspection dates

27–29 April 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Outcomes for pupils

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- School leaders and managers have failed to ensure effective systems and procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. As a result, not all of the independent school standards have been met.
- The school's single central record shows that not all staff who teach at the school, including the headteacher, are recorded as having undergone a disclosure, barring and criminal record check.
- At the start of the inspection, basic safeguarding and child protection training had not been undertaken by many of the staff.
- Despite recent new staff appointments, no members of the leadership team had completed the necessary safety training on how to recruit staff.
- Safeguarding records are not kept securely on the school premises and were not available for scrutiny at the time of the inspection.
- School leaders have not ensured that pupils are kept safe in school. Pupils' welfare needs have not been given sufficient consideration. For example, the records relating to concerns are not good enough.
- Teachers do not always give pupils sufficient feedback on how to improve their work.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress, often from low starting points, in many areas of the curriculum.
- Teaching staff have very good subject knowledge and know their pupils well. They plan learning which meets the needs of each of the different groups of pupils who attend the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has continued to improve since the previous inspection, as evidenced by an increase in the number of pupils gaining five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.
- School leaders are very good at ensuring pupils have a good understanding of current issues. For example, all are aware of the different groups identified in the 2010 Equalities Act and recognise clearly the need to respect all groups of people. This shows their good understanding of fundamental British values.
- Pupils' attendance is higher than the national average, and those spoken to say they enjoyed coming to school.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

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

- As a matter of urgency, improve the quality of safeguarding within the school by:
  - ensuring that all staff employed by the school or those who provide their services in a voluntary capacity are subject to all the necessary safeguarding checks including a disclosure, barring and criminal record check
  - ensuring all of the required details are recorded on the school's single central register.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring all staff, including those with designated responsibility for safeguarding, receive regular safeguarding training at an appropriate level
  - ensuring that training is undertaken by senior leaders in order to ensure the safe recruitment of staff
  - making sure that records relating to safeguarding issues are appropriate and are stored on the school premises.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by making sure safeguarding checks on all staff are carried out rigorously.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by increasing the amount of feedback given to pupils in order that they can better understand how to improve their work.
- Urgently work to comply with the following independent school standards:
  - ensure all staff working in the school have all been subject to an enhanced criminal record check (paragraph 18, 18(2) 18(2)(d))
  - ensure 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 (paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b))
  - 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))
  - 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)(b)).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The leadership and management of the school is inadequate because the headteacher, proprietors and governors have not ensured the school's safeguarding systems and practice meet independent school standards.
- The school's single central record shows that approximately half the staff who currently work at the school and the headteacher have not been subject to the required safeguarding checks. While the headteacher is aware that these checks are needed in order to comply with the independent school standards, too little action has been taken to rectify the situation and this poses a safeguarding risk to pupils.
- At the start of the inspection, few staff had undertaken recent safeguarding training. This was quickly remedied and by the end of the inspection all staff had completed the required online training. However, training for the designated member of staff with responsibility for safeguarding was also out of date and this training, although booked for the near future, has yet to take place. This also represents a breach in safeguarding requirements and once again poses a risk to pupils' welfare.
- The quality of the school's record-keeping in relation to safeguarding pupils is inadequate. The headteacher described occasions when she had supported vulnerable pupils in the past. She explained how she had made a referral to the local authority 'children missing from education' team. This referral was verified by a member of the local authority team, who said further updates had been passed to the school. However, no records were available in school about this incident or any other safeguarding issues at the time of the inspection.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school which she shares with staff and pupils. Staff and pupils spoken to during the inspection were passionate about the school and the opportunities it offers its pupils.
- Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide an effective curriculum which meets their individual needs well. All subjects offered lead to a recognised qualification and, as a result, pupils leave with a wide range of accreditations in subjects as diverse as art and Arabic.
- Most of the teaching staff at the school volunteer their services. As a result, the school does not operate a structured performance management system. However, teachers' performance is monitored closely by the headteacher who makes frequent visits to classrooms and accurately assesses staff performance. As a result, the quality of teaching has been sustained since the previous inspection.
- A range of enrichment activities, including trips to museums and art galleries, enable pupils to gain a very strong understanding of the world beyond their classroom. Debates and discussions undertaken in citizenship lessons enable pupils to gain an insight into current issues. For example, an assembly led by Year 11 pupils explained the concept of fundamental British values exceptionally well, evidencing their clear understanding of what is needed to be a good citizen.
- Five parents responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Their views were almost wholly positive and demonstrated how much they appreciated the work of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The school proprietors and governors have not been sufficiently diligent in ensuring all aspects of the independent school standards have been met. They have failed to carry out rigorous enough checks on the school's safeguarding systems and as a result these procedures are below the standard expected.
  - It was not possible to speak to the proprietor during the inspection. However, discussions were held with two parent representatives, both of whom were positive about the work of the school. They lacked a clear understanding of the independent school standards. Governance arrangements have not offered sufficient challenge to the headteacher in bringing about improvements to pupils' welfare and health and safety.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Systems in place to safeguard pupils are inadequate. Although school leaders are aware of some of the areas which are in urgent need of improvement, too little progress has been made towards rectifying current issues.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Evidence from the inspection, including scrutiny of the work in pupils' books and information from the school's system for measuring pupils' progress, shows that the quality of teaching is good across the school.
- All staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The work staff set closely matches pupils' individual needs and as a result they make good and better progress, often from low starting points.
- Although no member of the current staff team is a qualified teacher, all have great enthusiasm and a good working knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Their very good use of questions to identify how much pupils know and understand enables them to plan activities carefully and to maximise pupils' learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and are founded on mutual respect. Pupils who spoke with the inspector were quick to say how appreciative they are of staff and the way in which they 'believe we can do it'. This ensures pupils become confident learners who are unafraid to use and apply the skills and knowledge they have learned when taking on harder challenges.
- Homework forms a major part of learning and is completed regularly by most pupils. Pupils say they enjoy the challenge of answering the questions set for them and the research they undertake deepens their understanding.
- Teachers recognise the needs of their pupils well. Many pupils arrive at times other than the start of the school year. They undertake a thorough and rigorous assessment which also takes into account the results of previous national tests. From this clear baseline, teachers plan individual learning which supports the least able and challenges the most able to make as much progress as possible.
- Pupils often mark their own work and sometimes the work of their peers. However, discussions held with a group of pupils suggest that they would like teachers to give them more detailed feedback on what they could do to make their work better. They also commented: 'It would make it easier when we revise for our exams'.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate because school leaders have not ensured all the required safeguarding checks are securely in place. As a result, pupils' welfare has been put at risk and leaders cannot be assured that pupils are safe.
- Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. Those spoken to say they feel safe and that staff care for them and understand their needs. Typical comments included, 'I feel at home at school and can be myself because I am among friends'. However, the evidence does not support pupils' confidence due to leaders' casual approach to key safeguarding requirements.
- Staff and pupils are proud of their school. The importance staff place on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be clearly seen in the range of sport, music and art activities on offer to all pupils.
- The school promotes the British values of respect for the rule of law, democracy, tolerance and respect of other groups of people well through citizenship lessons. These values are integral to the school's ethos. Pupils spoken to were courteous and respectful to visitors, staff and each other, demonstrating their understanding that everyone should be respected. These values are reflected in opportunities for pupils to show a sense of responsibility, for example through raising money by holding a community fun day and fair to raise money for the school and for charity.
- Pupils are aware that discrimination and bullying can take many different forms. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying. Debates on this issue carried out in citizenship lessons have helped them to develop a balanced view and a recognition of the challenges faced by this group. The work they do in school helps pupils to keep safe outside school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning are clearly reflected in the good progress they make in lessons.
- They show polite and respectful attitudes to staff and visitors to the school. Break and lunchtimes are calm occasions when staff and pupils can be seen chatting and playing games such as table tennis.
- Pupils attend school regularly and most are punctual. Overall attendance is good and is higher than the national average for secondary school pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils make good and sometimes excellent progress in mathematics and English from a range of different starting points. They leave with good levels of accreditation and are well prepared for the next stage in their education or the world of work.
- School data and work in pupils' books confirm this good level of progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils often start school with standards below those expected for their age group. Despite their low starting points, last year, all pupils achieved five or more GCSE passes by the end of Year 11.
- The number of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE passes including in English and mathematics is increasing each year. Last year, the percentage of pupils who achieved this was higher than that nationally. This was identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection report which the school has clearly addressed.
- The school does not identify disadvantaged pupils and as such does not collect data on their progress. However, it does identify pupils who have additional needs and this group makes equally good progress to others in school.
- Staff are proud of the achievement of all pupils. They work hard to ensure all make as much progress as possible in the time available to them at school. Most-able pupils are no exception and this small group is provided with extra challenge in both English and mathematics to ensure they achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Currently, there are no pupils who have recognised special educational needs or disability. However, school records show that past pupils with special educational needs have made good progress during their time in school.
- A small number of pupils are new to speaking English. They arrived at the start of this school year. This group has made very strong progress both academically and in developing fluency in English. This is due to the very thorough approach taken by teaching staff who have planned and prepared a curriculum which has met their needs well.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107793
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012841
<b>DfE registration number</b>	382/6016

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim girls day school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	27
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Al-Amal Education Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Nadem Ramazan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Samira El-Turabi
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£1,000 (£800 for siblings)
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 518817 or 07581 285117
<b>Website</b>	unknown
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@islamiagirlshigh.org">info@islamiagirlshigh.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22–23 May 2012

## Information about this school

- Islamia Girls High School is an independent, Muslim girls' school, which caters for the needs of pupils between the ages of nine and 16 who live in Huddersfield and the surrounding areas.
- The school has an Islamic character and pupils who attend undertake Islamic studies.
- Currently there are 27 pupils on roll all of whom are aged between 11 and 16.
- The school was first opened in 1984. The current headteacher has been in post for 15 years.
- Currently, none of the pupils who attend has an identified special educational need or disability.
- The school was last inspected in May 2012. Since then, there have been several changes to staff.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector scrutinised all policies and procedures required in order to establish the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Pupils' learning was observed in a range of curriculum areas across the school. The headteacher accompanied the inspector during approximately half of these observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and two groups of pupils as well as two parent governors. It was not possible to meet the proprietor during the inspection due to illness.
- The inspector took into account the views of eight staff members who returned inspection questionnaires.
- The inspector took into account comments left by five parents on Parent View (Ofsted's online survey).

## Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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