

Zakaria Muslim Girls' High School

111 Warwick Road, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 6AJ

Inspection dates

27–29 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Adequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently strong enough over time to ensure that all pupils are making good progress, particularly in mathematics.
- The most able pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge. As a result, not enough of these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils do not receive up-to-date careers advice to help them make informed careers choices before leaving secondary school.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that all the independent school standards are consistently met.
- Leaders have not taken robust actions to promptly improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress rates across the school.
- Senior leaders are new to their roles. While they are keen to bring about improvements to the school, they have not fully developed the skills required and are not provided with sufficient leadership time to make the necessary impact.
- The governing body does not fully check and challenge aspects of the school's work, particularly the rate of pupils' progress over time.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, governors and staff have created a compassionate, supportive and nurturing culture. The social and emotional needs of pupils are very well met. Pupils feel safe and cared for.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are friendly, behave responsibly and cooperate well together.
- Pupils achieve well in some subjects, such as English literature, geography and religious studies.
- Behaviour across the school is good. Pupils are courteous, well mannered and behave well in lessons and at social times.
- Parents are very supportive of the work of the 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 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it becomes consistently good or better by:
 - better matching teaching to pupils' starting points, including providing increased challenge for the most able pupils
 - developing the use of effective questioning to deepen pupils' learning.
- Ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next stages of education, employment or training by:
 - providing pupils with a wide range of impartial careers guidance to help them make effective choices
 - checking pupils' career destinations to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's guidance.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management and accelerate the rate at which the school improves by:
 - implementing the school's new marking and feedback policy
 - making effective use of the school's pupils' progress information system to set accurate baselines in all subjects, establishing challenging pupils' targets and regularly monitoring pupils' progress towards these
 - re-establishing teacher appraisal approaches to ensure that performance management systems are used to improve the quality of teaching and learning
 - improving the level of challenge provided by the headteacher and governors to hold leaders and staff accountable for their areas of responsibility
 - leaders and managers having the skills, knowledge and time to carry out their roles.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- The proprietor must ensure that pupils receiving secondary education have access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner so that they are able to make informed choices about a broad range of career options, and that helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential; (paragraph 2(2)(e)(i),(ii),(iii)).
- The proprietor must ensure 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; (paragraph 3(a),(c),(d)).
- The proprietor must demonstrate that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and must use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3(g)).
- The proprietor must ensure that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place (paragraph 4).

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school (paragraph 34(1)) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(a),(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders, including governors, have not been effective enough to secure consistently good teaching and pupils' progress. Their actions have not fully addressed variability in pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have been overly positive in their overall judgements of the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. While they have systems to record pupils' progress information and approaches for checking the quality of teaching, they do not use these regularly enough to arrive at accurate conclusions.
- The three senior leaders are relatively new to their posts. Consequently, their skills are not fully developed and they do not have sufficient time to complete their leadership roles effectively.
- Senior leaders are very keen to take action to address the shortcomings in the quality of teaching, assessment and learning, and to improve pupils' outcomes. For example, the school's marking policy has been revised in order to provide better feedback for pupils, while remaining manageable for staff. However, it is too early to determine the impact of this policy on pupils' learning.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work hard to ensure that pupils are provided with guidance, care and nurture. As a result, pupils grow in self-confidence and thrive emotionally and socially.
- Performance management systems are in place and staff value the training and opportunities to share effective practice. However, the school's appraisal approaches do not check regularly enough if this training is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes.
- The school's curriculum provides breadth and balance and is effectively planned around national curriculum subjects. Across the year, pupils have access to a small number of after-school clubs which provide further opportunities to improve English, mathematics, science skills and fitness.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Leaders and staff have created a culture of respect and tolerance in this welcoming and friendly school. The school's curriculum enables pupils to gain an understanding of different faiths and an appreciation of different cultures.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Opportunities to develop an understanding of democracy are frequently provided. For example, the pupils have had visits from the local Member of Parliament. The school has useful links with local businesses and universities and regularly engages in charity fundraising. Discussions with pupils demonstrated that they had a clear understanding of the need for respect for others who may come from a different background to themselves.
- Leaders' plans for improving the school aim to address many of the aspects which require improvement. However, sometimes leaders' evaluations of improvements made are too positive.

Governance

- Governors are supportive of the school. They have taken steps to try to address some of the turbulence to staffing and senior leadership roles. They have been very focused in their efforts to secure the move to a new school building. However, they do not provide sufficient challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders in order to improve the quality of teaching or to improve pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The culture of safeguarding is strong and leaders and staff implement a thorough and determined approach to keeping pupils safe. There is very effective engagement with parents and other agencies. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training: for example, training on the 'Prevent' duty to recognise the signs of radicalisation and extremism. The school's administrator has very efficient systems in place. For example, safeguarding and risk assessment documentation is organised to a high standard.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent, especially in the teaching of mathematics. As a result, over time too few pupils make good progress in this subject.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not plan work which is well matched to pupils' abilities. Sometimes the work is too easy and repeats work which is already understood by pupils.
- Most-able pupils are often given tasks which do not provide them with sufficient challenge and which they complete with very little effort.
- Teachers use questioning to check if pupils have grasped the key knowledge or to make sure that pupils have understood instructions. However, teachers' questions do not challenge pupils enough to explain their thinking and they miss opportunities to deepen pupils' learning. Sometimes where least-able pupils do not understand, teachers are too slow to tackle these misconceptions.
- Teachers in the main follow the school's marking policy. Leaders recognise that some of this marking does not fully address pupils' errors or accurately identify next steps in learning. The school has recently developed its marking policy to address this. It is too early to determine the impact of this policy on pupils' learning.
- Most teachers complete regular assessments to evaluate pupils' learning throughout the year. However, while the school has records for pupil achievement information, these have not been systematically maintained. Some subjects, such as information and communication technology, have not assessed pupils' initial achievements carefully enough and this makes it difficult to measure pupils' progress from their starting points.
- Very positive relationships exist between staff and pupils, and pupils with their peers. This provides a friendly working atmosphere within lessons. Pupils work well both on individual tasks or when working together in groups. For example, groups of pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of the social, economic, political and environmental impact of the Rio Olympics during a geography lesson.

- The school encourages a love of literature and pupils are regularly seen during their breaktimes and lunchtimes engrossed in a book. A suitable range of books are available in the school's two libraries. Pupils can read fluently and demonstrate good comprehension skills. Pupils have good-quality reading books in school. They can identify reading choices and their favourite authors.
- Some teachers adapt teaching and resources to support least-able pupils. Where this is well thought through, these pupils made stronger progress.
- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and where they are teaching in subjects outside their subject expertise they strive to develop their skills.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate homework, including open-ended tasks which develop their independent learning skills. The school sets high expectations for the completion of homework.
- Regular meetings and appropriately detailed reports ensure that parents are well informed about pupils' progress. Parents were positive about the information they receive from the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop self-confidence well. They are supported and nurtured in a caring environment where there are positive and mutually respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils effectively develop their understanding of how to be a successful learner through group discussions which provide opportunities to express views in a range of subjects.
- Pupils' physical and emotional needs are well catered for. Regular assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on personal characteristics such as tolerance. For example, in one assembly pupils were encouraged to 'be considerate to others' and their reflections, 'pearls of wisdom', were recorded in personal journals. If pupils require additional social or emotional support, guidance and counselling are available from school staff.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, including online. E-safety is part of the curriculum and pupils understand the risks of online grooming. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying but report that this is rare and that staff would deal with this promptly. The school's records show that this is the case and that any incidents are dealt with thoroughly. Pupils and parents agree that the school is a safe place.
- Pupils benefit from visiting speakers from a local university and they are encouraged to have wide aspirations for future careers. Guidance is also provided on how to develop curriculum vitae and how to prepare for interviews. However, a well-structured, impartial careers programme is not in place and the school has no system to check where pupils move to once they leave school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous, polite and show respect to one another, to adults and visitors.

- In lessons pupils listen attentively. They are keen to learn and work hard. During breaktimes and lunchtimes pupils are well behaved and engage in sociable activities. Most pupils chat with friends in small groups, while others opt for quieter activities with several pupils choosing to read a book.
- Pupils show pride in attending the school. For example, wearing of uniform is well adhered to right across the school. Pupils' attendance is good and above that found nationally. The school works hard to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who have poor attendance and this is bringing about improvements.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because progress is too variable across a range of subjects. This is because the quality of teaching has not been consistently good enough over time.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected grade in mathematics was too low. As a result, not enough pupils were well prepared for their next stage of education or training.
- From their starting points, current pupils' progress is variable across different subjects. While the majority of current pupils are making the required or better progress, there are still too many whose progress is not good enough, particularly in mathematics.
- The most able pupils' progress is variable. Although some are making good progress, for example in chemistry, in other subjects pupils too often do not go on to achieve the higher grades that they are capable of. This is because teaching does not typically challenge them to make good progress.
- Pupils' achievements in some subjects are stronger. For example, by the end of key stage 4, pupils perform consistently well in English literature, geography and religious studies.

School details

Unique reference number	107792
DfE registration number	382/6015
Inspection number	10020761

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Muslim Education Trust (Batley)
Chair	Mr Shabir Daji
Headteacher	Mr Y Jasat
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,300
Telephone number	01924 444 217
Website	www.zakariamuslimgirlshighschool.co.uk
Email address	info@zakariamuslimgirlshighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–20 September 2013

Information about this school

- Zakaria Muslim Girls' High School is a Muslim day school, which is located on two sites within walking distance from each other in the Kirklees area of Batley. The school opened in 1982 in response to parental demand for a Muslim school in the area.
- The school is registered for up to 199 pupils aged from 11 to 16 and currently there are 146 pupils on roll, none of whom has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school takes most pupils from Indian and Pakistani heritages, and pupils come from Kirklees and surrounding areas.

- The school had its last inspection in September 2013 and monitoring visits in October 2015, December 2015 and July 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted inspector.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, two governors and the three senior teachers. The inspector also spoke to a group of three teachers and observed the work of the other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with pupils informally during the school day and formally in meetings with representative groups of pupils from key stage 3 and key stage 4. During these meetings, inspectors listened to some pupils read and spoke to them about their work and the school.
- The inspectors visited all the classrooms and observed learning in a range of subjects. They also considered pupils' work in a range of year groups and subjects.
- The lead inspector toured both school buildings, both inside and outside to ensure that relevant independent school standards were met and that pupils' welfare was taken into account.
- Inspectors considered the 11 parental responses that were made to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector spoke to four parents at the start of the third day.
- The inspectors considered the behaviour of pupils during different times of the school day and took account of pupils', parents' and staff's opinions about behaviour.
- The inspectors examined school documentation, including information relating to pupils' achievement and the admission and attendance registers. They also studied a range of policies required as part of the independent school standards, including those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and welfare, as well as health and safety documents.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julia Wright

Ofsted Inspector

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