

The Fountain

109–111 New Cross Street, Bradford BD5 8BP

Inspection dates

17–19 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They do not develop or implement their policies and procedures systematically or rigorously enough.
- Leaders have an over-optimistic view about the standards achieved by the school. Consequently, they have not provided good enough support to teachers to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have not made sure that pupils receive impartial careers advice. Nor do they check whether pupils stay on their chosen courses when they leave school. As a result, leaders do not know whether they have successfully prepared pupils for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders do not track attendance robustly. Therefore, leaders do not know whether the support they give to individual pupils is helping them to improve their attendance.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' knowledge are not sufficiently accurate. As a result, not enough lessons in English, mathematics, science and religious education support pupils to move on quickly in their learning.
- The most able pupils spend too much time waiting for other pupils to catch up. The work they are given does not deepen their knowledge or understanding of the different subjects they study.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils get enough opportunities to put into practice their knowledge of respect and tolerance for people who follow different faiths and or who live lifestyles different from their own.
- Not all teachers speak English clearly enough to be quickly understood by the pupils. These teachers do not provide good examples for pupils who are struggling with English spellings or developing their own vocabulary.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff have an exceptional commitment to developing pupils' spirituality and moral understanding. Consequently, pupils have a deep understanding of their faith and their role as British citizens.
- All pupils study Arabic and Urdu and the majority achieve grades A*–B at GCSE.
- Teachers are confident in assessing pupils' learning in their Islamic studies. As a result, pupils make good progress on these courses.
- Overall, pupils' attainment has risen since the last inspection and in 2016, pupils' average attainment in eight subjects was higher than that in other schools nationally.

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 effectiveness of the proprietor and the headteacher by ensuring that:
 - they pay meticulous attention to the requirements of the independent school standards and to the accuracy of the policies and procedures they adopt
 - they apply their policies and procedures without exception, particularly those relating to the employment of staff and the management of risk
 - their self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate
 - plans to improve the school are based on an accurate analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and destinations
 - pupils receive impartial advice and guidance about their future career options
 - pupils gain first-hand experience of a wide range of people from different backgrounds and faiths so they fully understand the tolerance and respect they articulate so clearly.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress in a range of subjects by ensuring that:
 - teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurately linked to the standards all pupils are expected to reach for their age and the standards required in new GCSE courses
 - teachers plan work that moves pupils on from what they already know, understand and can do
 - teachers make sure that the most able pupils are set work that challenges them to learn quickly and think deeply, so they reach the highest standard they can
 - all teachers speak clearly in lessons so pupils quickly understand what is being said and are helped to develop their own vocabulary.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that:
 - all staff who have leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b))
 - pupils receive up-to-date impartial careers guidance to enable them to make informed choices and are encouraged to fulfil their potential (paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii))
 - teaching enables pupils to make good progress from their different starting points, that lessons are well planned, taking into account the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of pupils and effective teaching strategies are used to enable pupils to make good progress (paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d))
 - before appointing all staff undertaking regulated activity, an enhanced criminal record check is undertaken (paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(d)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher shares the sole proprietor's over-optimistic view of the standards reached by the school. Progress made in some areas of the school's work since the last inspection has not been sustained, for example, the brief introduction of impartial careers advice. In other areas, leaders were too slow to respond to the absence of a key teacher to ensure that any pupils in Year 11 in 2015 achieved GCSEs at grades A*–C in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher and proprietor are not meticulous enough when developing the policies and procedures that steer the work of the school. This means that they miss parts of requirements and they do not always make it clear what systems staff should follow. Although all such issues were addressed during the inspection, the lack of rigorous attention to detail slows the school's improvement.
- The headteacher does not systematically track either the attendance of pupils in school or the sustained destinations of pupils when they leave the school. Consequently, she does not know how effectively the school's provision is in ensuring that pupils want to come to school or how well it prepares them for their next steps in education.
- The headteacher monitors the effectiveness of teaching through visits to lessons and reviewing the work in pupils' books. However, little of the verbal feedback given to teachers is written down. This makes it difficult for teachers to check whether they are improving their practice, for example, by setting work at the correct level so that it matches pupils' different ability levels. As a result, the quality of teaching, and the progress pupils make, are not improving quickly enough.
- Teachers are committed to the aims of the school and all spoke keenly about the support they are given to improve their practice. Each teacher leads a subject area but very few have responsibilities other than for their own teaching. Recent training opportunities to guide the introduction of new GCSE courses have been appreciated. Pay incentives are used to retain staff and when pupils' attainment has been high.
- The range of subjects offered is wider at key stage 3 than at key stage 4. Nevertheless, the headteacher and staff have ensured that all pupils have access to all required areas of learning. Opportunities for creative and aesthetic development run through a range of subjects and the recently introduced after-school clubs. The science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) club is popular with the pupils, who enthusiastically take part in practical tasks in the science lab.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is strong. Talks and workshops given by the local police help to ensure that pupils have a good grasp of the law. Many elements of the Islamic study course teach respect and tolerance for all people. All pupils study religious education to GCSE level and learn about a range of different religions. Although pupils' cultural and social development is encouraged, there are limited opportunities for them to mix and meet with people from outside their local community who may have lifestyles different from their own.

Governance

- The proprietor has not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. His self-evaluation of how the standards are met was inaccurate and in parts bore no relation to the school. Consequently, plans to improve the effectiveness of the school are not closely linked to the areas requiring most improvement.
- The proprietor regularly discusses all aspects of the school's work with the headteacher. However, records of these discussions and the challenge and support offered to the headteacher are limited. As a result, the proprietor has no systematic way of demonstrating or knowing whether he is influencing the development and improvement of the school.
- External agencies have been involved in teaching staff and pupils how to keep themselves safe online. However, the proprietor does not have a good enough overview of the internet filtering and monitoring system. There is no indication that pupils or staff access anything inappropriate or harmful through the school's system. Nevertheless, in this matter, as in many others, the proprietor's lack of understanding limits the effectiveness of the checks he makes.
- The proprietor is actively involved in ensuring that the school successfully fulfils its core aims with regard to pupils' spiritual and moral development in 'enabling [the pupils] to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah and be a law abiding British citizen prepared to contribute to society.'

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. By the end of the inspection, an appropriate safeguarding policy was in place. Parents are informed through the school prospectus and notices at the entrance of the school that copies of the policy are available on request.
- Crucially, staff are well trained, particularly in identifying pupils at risk of female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and staff know how to protect pupils from extremist views. They encourage pupils to watch the news and discuss world events openly. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe and are confident to talk about what to do if worried or concerned about a range of issues.
- Leaders, with one exception addressed during the inspection, check and record the suitability of staff. Leaders quickly responded to any identified gaps in safeguarding policies and procedures to make sure that everything was in order before the end of the inspection.
- Staff know individual pupils and their families well and discuss any concerns about the pupils' welfare appropriately. Staff work with other agencies to support the welfare of individual pupils, on the rare occasions it is needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too often, teachers plan lessons that do not help pupils make good progress from their different starting points. In too many lessons, the most able pupils do the same work as all other pupils and spend valuable learning time waiting for others to catch up.
- Teachers' assessments are not always accurate. For example, over half the predictions for GCSE grades in English, mathematics, science and religious education (RE) in 2016 were over optimistic. As a result, teachers did not identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge, so too few reached grades A*–A.
- The over-optimistic assessments were also seen in the school's pupil progress information and in pupils' current work. As a result, lessons are planned that do not address the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils do not make rapid enough progress towards the standards expected for their ages.
- Some teachers do not speak clearly enough for pupils to quickly understand what they are saying. This slows down the pace of learning. Equally, teachers' poor pronunciation does not help pupils who need help to develop their spelling skills or to extend their vocabulary.
- Pupils read often and most enjoy reading. All pupils read aloud in class and listen respectfully to each other, even when some pupils are less confident or fluent.
- Some teachers demonstrated highly effective approaches to questioning and checking whether pupils had understood new concepts. Most teachers are skilled at planning lessons that link the content of the lesson to real-life situations. For example, in mathematics, the teacher ensured that pupils understood how they could apply their knowledge of ratios to everyday situations.
- Teachers regularly set relevant homework that is linked to the course being followed. Staff are diligent in checking that homework has been completed, which helps pupils to develop their independent learning skills.
- Those who teach the Islamic study course are more confident and accurate in assessing pupils' progress in these subjects. Teaching is more closely matched to the pupils' needs and, as a result, they make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive the impartial careers guidance they need to raise their aspirations and help them to make informed choices about their futures.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has developed a work experience programme. Almost all Year 10 pupils enjoy week-long placements in primary schools or pharmacies. Recently, a programme of visits to different universities has started. During the inspection, the headteacher started the process of securing an external service to provide the impartial advice required.

- Other aspects of the pupils' personal development are strong. The school nurse provides effective guidance to groups of pupils on a range of personal issues and gives specific support to individual pupils when needed. Pupils appreciate the lessons about keeping themselves safe online.
- The school prepares the pupils to be active citizens in the future. They learn how to raise their concerns through formal means, for example, by writing to the headteacher to object to the loss of morning breaks. They also learn to discuss potentially contentious issues, for example, the role of women priests in the Church of England.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attendance is lower than the attendance of pupils in most other schools. Although attendance rose between 2015 and 2016, leaders do not track attendance over the year so do not know whether this increase has been sustained.
- The behaviour of the pupils in lessons is consistently compliant and lessons are very rarely interrupted by inattention or poor behaviour. However, the teachers' approach in lessons gives few opportunities for pupils' enthusiasm for learning to emerge. When it does, especially in physical education (PE) lessons, pupils find it hard to manage their excitement and ebullience. Unfortunately, this stymies their chance to develop further the games skills they have.
- Pupils' conduct around school and the respect they show for each other, staff and visitors are exceptional. Pupils are confident that bullying does not occur. They are equally confident about what they would do if someone was unkind, and they know how to resolve difficulties between themselves and seek the help of staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The work in current pupils' books does not match the teachers' records about the progress pupils make. Work shows that only some pupils are making strong progress overall. More pupils appear to be making stronger progress in mathematics than English.
- The absence of information about pupils' attainment before they arrive at the school creates difficulties in assessing whether the GCSE grades they achieve represent good or average progress in English, mathematics or science.
- The most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because of the approaches used in some lessons, where they wait for pupils who need more time to catch up.
- Success at GCSE has improved since the last inspection. In 2016, the proportion of Year 11 pupils who achieved GCSEs at grades A*–C in English and mathematics and attainment over eight subjects, was higher than that achieved in most schools. However, the school's information indicates that fewer than expected reached grades A*–A in the core subjects.
- Most pupils achieved grades A*–B in Arabic and Urdu GCSEs. The majority of pupils across all year groups made good progress in their Islamic studies and reached the expected standard by the end of the school year.

- Leaders do not keep records about how many pupils continue to study in their chosen sixth form or remain in education, training or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	134587
DfE registration number	380/6116
Inspection number	10026034

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	10 to 16
Gender of pupils	Female
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	M I Afsar
Headteacher	Abeer Niehad
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,745
Telephone number	01274 735913
Website	The school does not have a website.
Email address	admin@fountainschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 March 2011

Information about this school

- The school is run by the sole proprietor and the headteacher. An additional maulana (teacher at the madrasa, the Islamic school using the school during the evenings and at weekends) is available to fulfil the duties of a trustee if required.
- The school building is used as a madrasa, run by the school's proprietor, a local imam, during evenings and weekends.

- Twenty-four former pupils, aged between 17 and 19, attend the school during the school day to complete their Islamic studies. Seven of these former pupils are taught in classes with the registered pupils. The other 17 are taught in the prayer room by maulanas attached to the madrasa. During the inspection, the proprietor requested, from the Department for Education (DFE), a material change to the school's registration to increase the school's age range from 10–16 to 10–19.
- Since the last Ofsted inspection, the school has been inspected by the Bridge Inspectorate on 20–23 January 2014. At that time, the school was judged to be satisfactory. The school did not meet all the required independent school standards and was required to produce an action plan to demonstrate how those standards would be met. The DfE confirmed to the school on 21 May 2014 that the action plan was acceptable.
- There are no pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils speak English as an additional language and are fluent in the use of English.
- The school aims to 'provide a balanced high quality Islamic and national curriculum based theoretical and vocational education within a secure Islamic all female environment in order to equip the pupils with the necessary knowledge skills, experience, moral values, and Islamic spirituality for a successful life.' The school also aims to 'infuse into the whole of the pupil's personality and create in her an emotional attachment to Islam and enable her to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah and be a law abiding British citizen prepared to contribute to society.'

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons covering both the Islamic and English curriculums and all year groups for varying lengths of time, including a joint lesson visit with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read during visits to lessons.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks was reviewed alongside the school's assessment information. Four groups of pupils met with inspectors and pupils talked with inspectors during lessons and at breaktime.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor, the headteacher and teachers to discuss all aspects of the school's work.
- The views of the six parents, who gave written responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online survey), were considered.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents relating to the work of the school, including checks on the suitability of staff and information about the progress and attainment of the pupils.

Inspection team

Susan Hayter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Sharpe

Her Majesty's Inspector

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