

Islamia Girls' School

129 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6PE

Inspection dates

21–23 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and trustees are extremely committed to maintaining high standards and ensuring that this outstanding school continues to improve. The school meets all the independent school standards.
- The headteacher, with strong support from a very able assistant headteacher, is effective in developing a culture of very high expectation and aspiration that enables pupils and staff to excel. Staff are extremely motivated and share leaders' drive for continuous improvement.
- The trustees have great ambition for the school. They are highly skilled and have a secure understanding of how to improve the school. They are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide strong support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure that high standards are maintained.
- Pupils make exceptionally strong progress from their starting points in all subjects across the curriculum because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Pupils' attainment in GCSE examinations is consistently well above the national average in all subjects.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils receive high-quality impartial careers advice and guidance that ensures that they make informed choices about which courses meet their needs and aspirations.
- Pupils are very polite, courteous and supportive of each other. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils show a genuine thirst for learning. Staff ensure that pupils develop into very confident, self-motivated and self-assured young women.
- Leaders and trustees ensure that pupils always feel safe. Pupils are protected remarkably well from unsafe situations, including partisan political views, radicalisation and extremism.
- The provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Although pupils enjoy coming to school, the attendance of a very small number of pupils is not always as regular as that of their peers. As a result, they miss valuable learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the attendance of a minority of pupils is as good as the majority, so that they make routinely rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and trustees have ensured that high standards continue to be maintained since the previous inspection and that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders demonstrate an uncompromising commitment and considerable success in ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils. The headteacher is a highly effective leader who is relentless in her drive to bring about improvements. She has created a culture of excellence that enables pupils and staff to succeed. Staff share the headteacher's high expectations and unwavering ambition.
- The arrangements for performance management of staff are robust. Staff are set challenging targets, which include reference to pupils' progress and the school's main priorities. Staff receive effective training, support and advice to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently effective across the school.
- Leaders work closely with staff, and there is strong teamwork to improve teaching. Leaders and teachers carry out joint observations of learning in lessons and conduct regular scrutiny of books to bring about improvements. Teachers have good opportunities to share and learn from the effective practice that exists in the school.
- Leaders regularly track the progress of pupils across the school in all subjects. The few pupils who are not doing as well as they should are identified very quickly for timely support to ensure that they make rapid progress.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is exceptional and meets the needs of pupils extremely well. The curriculum is very engaging and inspires pupils to learn and achieve their very best. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is flexible and constantly reviewed. For example, leaders have introduced a new GCSE course in computer science to widen the curriculum and improve pupils' coding and programming skills. The curriculum is challenging and extends pupils' thinking. Some pupils are entered for exams early, for example, in Arabic and French.
- The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of clubs, extra activities and visits, to extend pupils' knowledge and improve their artistic, creative and physical development. Religious education covers the study of a range of religions, and pupils' understanding of Islam is supported well through learning the Koran. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- British values are promoted effectively. Pupils learn about respect, rights and responsibilities, democracy and the rule of law. Pupils readily debate current issues such as election results, including the 2016 referendum in Britain.
- Pupils are taught effectively to value tolerance, human rights and the different cultures and religions represented in Britain and beyond. They show respect for diversity and commitment to equalities. For example, pupils learn about Judaism, visit a local Jewish school and mark the Holocaust Memorial Day. Pupils understand the importance of gender equality, women as positive role models and the importance of the suffragette movement. Overall, the school prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. However, leaders

conduct a periodic survey of the views of parents and carers. In the most recent survey of parents' views, almost all parents agreed that the school responds well to their concerns.

Governance

- The trustees are skilful and knowledgeable and have a secure understanding of school improvement. They know the school thoroughly, including its strengths and areas for development.
- They are very committed and highly ambitious for pupils. They visit the school regularly and do learning walks and book checks to see for themselves how well pupils are learning.
- They meet senior leaders regularly and receive detailed reports to plan further improvements to the school. They provide effective support to leaders and hold them to account for the work they do. They are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching across the school and are involved in decisions about teachers' pay awards.
- The trustees check the arrangements for safeguarding, including pre-employment checks. They work closely with leaders to keep pupils safe, including from radicalisation and extremism. All visiting speakers to the school are vetted to ensure that there is no promotion of partisan political or extremist views. As a result, trustees know that the school's safeguarding systems are fit for purpose.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders place a high priority on pupils' safety and welfare, and there is a strong culture of vigilance to keep pupils safe.
- The safeguarding policy meets current government requirements and is published on the school's website. Staff know the procedures to follow in the event of any safeguarding concern. Staff receive regular updates and training to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe.
- Pupils are taught well about unsafe situations and about how to keep safe. They also receive appropriate guidance about e-safety, cyber bullying and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- The school works successfully with parents and external partners to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Overall, the arrangements concerning safeguarding and child protection are robust, and records are detailed and well maintained.
- All parents who responded to the school's own survey agreed that their child feels safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching continues to be outstanding since the previous inspection. Teachers are strongly committed and have very high expectations of all pupils. Pupils make exceptional progress across the school in all subjects.
- Leaders and staff have created an outstanding learning ethos across the school that enables pupils to develop a thirst for knowledge and to achieve highly.
- Teachers are skilled, highly qualified and knowledgeable about their subjects. They know their pupils well and use assessment information effectively to ensure that they make rapid progress.
- Pupils' progress across the different subjects is monitored closely. Leaders and staff meet regularly to identify any pupil who is not making the progress that they should and who needs to be given additional support.
- Pupils are provided with effective feedback on how they can improve their work, in line with the school's assessment policy. This helps pupils to improve their work and consolidate their knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching assistants are tremendously skilled and well qualified and provide effective support to pupils to ensure that they make rapid progress. For example, Year 11 pupils are provided with particularly strong support in computer science to move their learning on quickly.
- Staff use questioning effectively to check pupils' learning and to help them deepen their understanding.
- There are exceptionally strong working relationships and mutual respect between pupils and between staff and pupils. Staff consistently make good use of praise to encourage and motivate pupils to do well. Overall, the classroom environment promotes exceptional learning.
- The most able pupils are challenged effectively through demanding work to ensure that they have to think hard and make the progress of which they are capable. The most able pupils tend to be entered early for some GCSE examinations.
- Pupils are routinely provided with challenging work to promote their thinking skills. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson, pupils were able to use correct scientific language to describe the characteristics of waves and the way in which energy is transferred.
- A strong feature of lessons is the emphasis on language, speaking and listening and building pupils' vocabulary. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, pupils compared two poems and were deeply involved in discussions as they shared their views about the poems. The teacher used probing questions to extend their vocabulary and deepen their understanding. This particularly helped pupils who speak English as an additional language to make rapid progress.
- Teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils to read aloud in the classroom to give them further confidence in reading to an audience and to improve their reading skills. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, pupils read a challenging text from 'Frankenstein' with clarity and expression.
- Pupils in Year 7 enjoy learning French. Teaching helps pupils to make strong progress

with pronunciation and understanding vocabulary.

- Homework is challenging and set routinely, in line with the school's policy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and show great care and respect for each other. They are very confident, self-disciplined and self-motivated learners who are proud of their achievements.
- Every pupil is known individually to staff. Staff provide pupils with high-quality care, support and advice to ensure that their personal, social and welfare needs are met and that they achieve well.
- Pupils that inspectors met stated that they feel very safe in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and from cyber bullying. They said that bullying, racism and homophobia have never been issues in the school and that behaviour is 'always good'. Pupils said that the school is 'like a family' where 'everyone knows each other' and there is a 'sense of community'. Year 7 pupils said that they are able to share any concerns they may have with Year 11 pupils because 'they are like our older sisters'.
- Pupils are taught effectively about other faiths, beliefs and cultures, including equalities. They show a secure understanding of, and have much respect for, diversity.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of responsibilities that they have in the school. Pupils' confidence increases through taking on roles as prefects, house captains and members of the school council.
- Pupils do not hesitate in approaching teachers if they have any worries. They know that teachers will provide the necessary support and take action to resolve any concerns. Pupils said they are 'close to [their] teachers' and some regard their teachers as their 'second mothers' because of the deep care they show.
- Leaders are strongly committed to ensuring that pupils are protected from extremism, radicalisation and any partisan political views. Pupils have a secure understanding of the need to protect themselves from these issues. All external speakers visiting the school are vetted closely to ensure that pupils are not exposed to any extremist, racist or prejudicial views.
- Pupils receive high-quality impartial careers guidance to help them to make informed choices about the next stage of their education. They visit universities and meet guest speakers from a range of professions and former pupils who are currently studying at university. These experiences inspire pupils to be ambitious for the future. Pupils are very clear about their aspirations and the next stage of their education. Almost all pupils enter further education to complete their A levels.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is exemplary. They show much kindness and respect to each other. The behaviour records show very few incidents of poor behaviour.
- In lessons, pupils consistently model exceptional conduct and attitudes to learning. This impacts positively on the strong progress that they make.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are punctual. Persistent absence is very low, and there are no exclusions. There are a few pupils whose attendance is not as good as that of their peers. This lower attendance hinders this group of pupils from making the same progress as their peers.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is 'very good' and incidents of poor behaviour, including name-calling or bullying, are extremely rare. Most parents who responded to the school's own survey agreed that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- As a result of consistently strong teaching, pupils make exceptional progress across the year groups in all subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- The school's own detailed tracking systems on pupils' progress and work in pupils' books, including coursework, show that pupils make exceptional progress.
- Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. However, by the time they leave school, their attainment across all subjects is well above average in GCSE. In 2016, all pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students achieving the English baccalaureate is much higher than the national average. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The most able pupils are consistently challenged through demanding work to help them to make the progress of which they are capable. In 2016, almost three quarters of all pupils achieved five or more A* to A grades at GCSE.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress across all subjects and achieve significantly. They benefit particularly from the speaking and listening opportunities that they have in lessons.
- Pupils said that mathematics teaching is 'strong' and teachers are 'very thorough'. Teachers' subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils ensure that they make rapid progress in mathematics. Pupils are provided with challenging work and they use their reasoning and problem-solving skills very well to solve a range of often-complex problems. Teaching supports and develops pupils' conceptual development so that they achieve highly in mathematics.
- Pupils said that teaching of science is a strength. Pupils are highly motivated in science and teachers' subject knowledge, enthusiasm and high expectations ensure that they do exceptionally well in both science and single sciences. Pupils use scientific vocabulary and apply their scientific knowledge very well to explain their thinking and interpret information correctly.

- Pupils make swift progress in English. They work independently and in groups extremely well. They use their thinking, speaking and listening skills effectively to express and defend their views and they respect the views of their peers. Pupils write extensively in English and across other subjects, and the quality of their written work is exceptional.
- Pupils are avid readers and they have a real love for reading. They have access to a wide range of books and high-quality texts. They read with great fluency and comprehension. Teachers ensure that pupils have every opportunity to read in lessons.
- Pupils' achievement is exceptional across the curriculum. For example, in 2016, all pupils achieved A*/A grades in GCSE geography, and over four fifths of pupils achieved A*/A grades in chemistry, biology and French.

School details

Unique reference number	101575
DfE registration number	304/6069
Inspection number	10026716

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Proprietor	Hasana Islam
Headteacher	Sdaqat Jabeen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,900
Telephone number	020 7372 3472
Website	www.islamiaschools.com
Email address	secretary@islamiaschools.com
Date of previous inspection	18–20 June 2014

Information about this school

- Islamia Girls' School is an Islamic selective secondary day school in the London Borough of Brent. It is part of the Yusuf Islam Foundation and is one of two schools owned by the proprietor, the other being Brondesbury College, a boys' secondary school.
- The school was founded in 1989. It is located on the first and second floor of a building shared with Islamia Primary School. The building is a purpose-built Victorian school building and shares the playground and a temporary dining space with the primary school.
- The school's mission statement is, 'To strive to provide the best education in a secure Islamic environment through the knowledge and application of the Koran and Sunnah.' The school aims to 'give students a strong sense of identity as Muslim women and to provide them with an understanding of Islam that prepares them to excel in higher

education and contribute to the wider world’.

- The school is registered for students from Year 7 to Year 11. There are currently 153 full-time students. Currently, there are no pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or disadvantaged pupils. About one in 10 pupils are identified as the most able. About four fifths of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has a headteacher and assistant headteacher. There are no subject leaders.
- Year 10 pupils were out on work experience during the inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not currently use the services of any alternative education providers.
- The previous standard inspection was conducted in June 2014. The school received a progress monitoring inspection in January 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspectors observed learning in lessons in all of the classes. Almost all of these visits to classrooms were conducted jointly with the headteacher or the assistant headteacher.
- A meeting was held with pupils across the school to discuss their learning and views about the school. An inspector listened to Year 7 pupils read and discussed their reading with them. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised books and pupils' performance information, and checked the single central register of employment checks on staff. They looked at pupils' attendance and behaviour records and the school improvement plan. Inspectors also examined documents and policies on the curriculum, safeguarding, welfare and health and safety.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, teachers and trustees. In addition, they attended the staff morning briefing.
- There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors considered the school's own recent survey on the views of parents, which had 77 responses. Inspectors considered 20 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

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