

Ghausia Girls' High School

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

Inspection dates

13–15 June 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have successfully tackled the inadequacies and unmet standards identified at the previous inspection, but the school is not yet good.
- The new governance and leadership teams have not had time to fully develop action planning and systems to monitor and improve teaching.
- Teaching is not consistently good in all subjects and year groups. In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment effectively in lessons to build systematically on pupils' skills.
- Teachers do not all have the in-depth subject knowledge to ask probing questions and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Pupils' mathematical, reasoning and writing skills are not promoted as well as they could be in some subjects.
- Outcomes for pupils require improvement. Pupils do not make consistently good progress in all subjects and year groups.
- Newly appointed middle leaders have a limited role in leading improvements in teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have high ambitions for the pupils. Senior leaders have the knowledge and skills to secure further improvements. Staff are motivated and committed to their work.
- The headteacher provides a good role model for teaching. Her skills are complemented by the deputy headteacher, who ensures that policies are implemented effectively.
- Governors are knowledgeable and support and challenge leaders effectively.
- Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are at the heart of the school's work. Pupils have a well-rounded education within an Islamic ethos.
- Pupils grow in confidence and are prepared well for the next stage of their lives.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They feel and are safe in school.
- There are strengths in teaching in science, English at key stage 3 and Islamic studies.

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?

- Quicken pupils' progress and raise standards by:
 - making effective use of assessment to adapt teaching in lessons to meet pupils' specific learning needs and build on pupils' prior knowledge and skills systematically
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge and their questioning and explanations in lessons in order to probe and deepen pupils' understanding
 - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to write at length and for different purposes across the curriculum using increasingly complex vocabulary and grammar and accurate spelling
 - developing pupils' reasoning and mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Continue to improve leadership and management by:
 - further developing the systems to monitor and evaluate teaching to take greater account of the impact that teaching has on pupils' progress and attainment
 - honing action planning to include the means to measure the success of actions on pupils' outcomes and identify who will evaluate the impact of actions
 - developing the skills of recently appointed middle leaders so they can lead improvements in teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management have been strengthened with the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher, new governors and the establishment of a trust board. Teaching has been improved with the appointment of new teaching staff with suitable subject specialisms. The new governance, leadership and staff are having a positive impact.
- The trust board, leaders and governors have quickly ensured that all independent school standards and other requirements are now met. They have successfully tackled the unmet standards and inadequacies in provision that were identified at the previous inspection.
- Leaders are fully aware of the strengths and areas requiring improvement in the school. The headteacher has the skills to lead further improvements in teaching across the school. The deputy headteacher ensures that policies are implemented effectively.
- The recently introduced system to assess pupils' knowledge and skills when they enter school and track their progress is helping to identify gaps in pupils' learning and provide extra support where needed. Leaders have set challenging targets for pupils, and teachers have suitably high expectations of what pupils should achieve.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning have initially focused on ensuring that minimum standards are met and teachers are applying school policies consistently. They have been effective in this and pupils' outcomes are improving as a result. However, the checks on teaching do not take full account of the impact that teaching has on pupils' attainment and progress over time. Consequently, feedback is not sharply focused on what teachers need to do to ensure that pupils make the most rapid progress possible and ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Leaders have established robust procedures to manage the performance of teachers, but as teachers' annual appraisals have not yet been completed, the impact of the new system is limited. Teachers have appropriate targets to raise pupils' achievement and address the whole-school priorities for improvement. They are motivated and committed to ensuring that pupils achieve well and promoting their all-round development.
- Leaders have developed useful links with several successful schools, including Manchester Islamic High School for Girls and Park High School Colne. These links support the sharing of best practice and provide coaching opportunities for staff. Teachers' professional development is increasingly linked to their needs and interests, identified through performance management.
- School-improvement planning is focused on the right priorities, with appropriate actions that are progressing well. However, the plans do not make clear how the impact of actions will be measured and evaluated.
- The senior leadership team has been enhanced with the addition of two staff from within school. They have had a positive impact, for example in managing the library and broadening pupils' reading, fundraising and policy development. However, their involvement in improving teaching has been limited to date. Senior leaders are aware of the need for further development.
- The curriculum is balanced and provides pupils with opportunities to pursue their interests

and take qualifications that further their aspirations. Leaders make every effort to make sure it meets pupils' needs. For example, they have employed a teacher to teach sociology GCSE, following requests from pupils. Curriculum plans and schemes of work are matched closely to the national curriculum standards expected for each year group.

- There are now suitable arrangements to ensure that pupils can exercise outdoors each day and receive two hours of physical education every week. Out-of-school-hours activities, such as chess, baking, art and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, extend pupils' skills and broaden their experiences.
- The school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a good understanding of the key principles underpinning democracy, liberty and rule of law and they demonstrate respect and tolerance in their behaviour.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly in all aspects of the school's work. Pupils gain a balanced understanding of news and global events and are encouraged to reflect on them with empathy and compassion. Pupils show respect for people from other races, cultures and faiths. They are taught about protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and show respect for people, regardless of age, disability, gender, sex or sexual orientation.

Governance

- Governance is effective. The newly constituted governing body has a knowledgeable chair and governors with a range of relevant skills. They have a strong commitment to improving the school and ensuring that pupils get a good all-round education within an Islamic ethos.
- Governors have a good grasp of the school's performance based on their understanding of data, regular visits to classes and reports from leaders. They provide good support and challenge for leaders and are firmly focused on securing further improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding policy takes account of current government requirements and is published on the school's website. Procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff and governors are rigorous.
- The safety and well-being of pupils is a high priority. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the most recent version of 'Keeping children safe in education'. They are aware of risks and know what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns. Record-keeping is thorough and fit for purpose. Staff and governors have completed relevant training in child protection, 'Prevent' duty, health and safety and first aid.
- Pupils are nurtured and cared for very effectively, so they feel and are safe in school. They say, for example, 'We can always talk to teachers if we feel threatened or unsafe and they will help us with any concerns.' Staff make sure that pupils are aware of risks, including, for example, when they are online and those associated with extremist views and radicalisation. Leaders engage effectively with parents and stakeholders to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Inadequacies in teaching that were identified at the last inspection have been eradicated. Leaders have recruited teachers with suitable subject expertise and are providing appropriate induction and training to ensure that all are aware of the expectations for teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is not good because some teaching lacks the depth required to enable pupils to make consistently good progress. Where progress is slower, teachers' questioning is not probing enough and their explanations do not deepen pupils' understanding. Teaching is not explicit enough in some lessons, so some pupils do not grasp fully what is being taught.
- The use of assessment over time has improved, with the introduction of an effective system to track pupils' progress from their starting points and the introduction of new schemes of work. These ensure that the curriculum is covered fully and enable teachers to assess pupils' progress accurately against expected standards for their age.
- Assessment is not used consistently well from day to day, however, to assess pupils' learning needs and adapt teaching in lessons. In some subjects, teachers do not build on pupils' prior learning systematically or deal with gaps in their understanding fully.
- Pupils' literacy skills are a key focus in English lessons and this has a positive impact. Literacy skills are not promoted as well as possible in all subjects, however. Pupils have limited opportunities to develop their skills in different types of writing – in history and geography, for example. At times, pupils do not use language that is clear enough to convey exact meaning and accurate grammar and spelling are not reinforced consistently.
- Reading is promoted successfully. The library has been replenished with a range of interesting books that enthuse pupils to read more widely and often. Reading comprehension is promoted well in all subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy the subject and have made more-rapid gains in their learning since the start of the school year. The school's current focus on developing pupils' reasoning skills is having a positive impact but is in its very early stages. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is similarly at an early stage.
- The teaching of science is a consistent strength in the school over time. The headteacher provides a good role model in effective teaching. The pupils are inspired by the teaching and achieve good standards in examinations. Teaching is also strong in English at key stage 3, in personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship and Islamic studies. The strengths in teaching are being used effectively by leaders to support further improvement.
- Resources are used well and leaders check carefully that teaching provides variety and interest for pupils. Teachers provide additional support for those pupils who need it.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils. They know each pupil well and pupils feel able to ask for support when they need it and to give their views on what works well.
- All the teaching standards that were unmet at the last inspection are now met.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and staff ensure that they are safe in school. The school building is safe and pupils are nurtured and cared for by staff. Their personal development is a high priority in lessons and all aspects of the school's work. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and develop effective personal skills.
- Pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations and ambition for their future. Effective and impartial careers education and advice provide pupils with a good understanding of their options and potential careers. They are encouraged to aim high by staff and are inspired by high-achieving speakers who visit the school.
- Pupils and staff all know each other well and pupils say that 'everyone gets along'. On the rare occasions that pupils fall out with each other, teachers help them to resolve issues quickly. Pupils are sure that there is no bullying in school and there was no evidence to suggest that there is.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different sorts of bullying, including, for example, cyber bullying, physical or verbal racist, gender or sexuality-based bullying. They are aware of risks associated with grooming, extremist views and radicalisation, having discussed them in depth in school. They know they can talk to staff about any concerns or feel harassed or unsafe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in the world beyond school. Their understanding is enhanced by reflections on the news and visits from fire safety and police officers. Pupils show compassion for people who are caught up in tragic events.
- All the standards that were unmet at the last inspection relating to the safety of pupils are now met.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are well prepared for and enthusiastic participants in lessons and complete their homework diligently.
- Attendance is high and pupils are punctual. There are no pupils who are persistently absent.
- Pupils conduct is consistently good in lessons, around the school and when outside. They are quick to respond to teachers' directions and represent the school positively. Disruption to learning is rare.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are not outstanding because pupils have not yet developed the resilience, self-motivation and self-assuredness to drive their own learning and achieve the best possible standards.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' poor progress in the past has had an impact on results in examinations. In 2016, pupils' attainment in GCSE examinations was below average, particularly in mathematics and English.
- Pupils currently in school make steady progress from their starting points. This is an improvement since the last inspection, and has been brought about by better teaching and improved curriculum planning. However, although pupils' progress is quicker, it is not yet consistently good in each year group and subject.
- In English and mathematics, pupils make the quickest progress in key stage 3. This is partly because pupils in key stage 4 have gaps in their learning that have not yet been fully addressed. Pupils now have more-challenging work in English and mathematics at key stage 3 and are building on their prior learning effectively. Appropriate support has been put in place to help pupils at key stage 4 catch up.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, progress is most rapid in science, PSHE and Islamic studies. Progress is not as rapid in geography and history because teaching does not capture pupils' imagination, or in information and communication technology because some pupils struggle to understand concepts.
- In the very small classes, pupils' progress is analysed by staff according to their individual starting points, progress and learning needs. This is effective in making sure that any pupils who need to catch up receive appropriate support and the most able pupils have suitably challenging work. There are no pupils registered with special educational needs and/or disabilities and no pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.
- Pupils' good personal development and increasingly secure knowledge and skills prepare them well for the next stage. In 2016, all pupils went into further education, training or employment. Pupils in the current Year 11 have appropriate places and an increasing number are pursuing advanced levels.
- The standards relating to pupils' outcomes that were unmet at the last inspection are now met.

School details

Unique reference number	131337
DfE registration number	888/6033
Inspection number	10034539

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
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Ghausia Education Trust
Chair	Mr M Yaqub
Headteacher	Mrs A Masood
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,250
Telephone number	01282 699214
Website	www.gghs-nelson.co.uk
Email address	admin@gghsnelson.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 September – 2 October 2015

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to staffing and governance of the school since the last inspection. The headteacher is newly appointed, having been the deputy headteacher previously. The new deputy headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2016 and all teaching staff have joined the school since September 2016. The governing body has been reconstituted with a new chair and several new members. The Ghausia Education Trust was established in April 2017, having taken over from the proprietor. The three members of the trust are also on the governing body.
- The previous standard inspection took place in September 2015 and the school received a

progress monitoring inspection in May 2016.

- Ghausia Girls' High School is an independent school registered for girls between 11 and 16 years. It has operated since 1996 and serves the Muslim community in Nelson. It provides pupils with a broad curriculum within an Islamic ethos.
- The vast majority of pupils join the school in Year 7 from a number of local primary and independent schools.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out at no notice.
- The inspection was commissioned by the DfE to consider, as part of the standard inspection, the school's progress in meeting independent school standards that were judged to be unmet at the previous inspection.
- The inspector scrutinised a random sample of pupils' work across all subjects from Years 7 to 10 and observed teaching in various subjects and year groups. Some observations were joint with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspector observed all aspects of the school's work, including assemblies and breaktimes. She spoke with pupils at breaktimes.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including action planning, self-evaluation, monitoring of teaching and performance management, pupils' progress tracking, safeguarding procedures, health and safety checks and risk assessments.
- The inspector met with school leaders, all teaching staff who were present in school, five governors including the chair of the governing body, two trustees, a group of pupils and parents.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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