

# Iqra Academy

Enterprise Way, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE3 8YQ

## Inspection dates

13–15 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders' and governors' successful implementation of their clear vision is securing a long-term, sustainable future for the school.
- The principal has successfully forged links with other organisations. The school is increasingly outward looking.
- Parents receive useful information about the school.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is detailed, honest and accurate. The school's improvement plans address the areas that require further development.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous. They can describe the strengths and areas for development. Staff benefit from well-planned training that improves the provision.
- Pupils benefit from effective teaching that provides interest and variety.
- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. The high level of challenge helps most-able pupils to make good progress and attain well.
- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the independent school standards, and ensure all of these are met.
- Last year, attainment in foundation subjects was high. It is improving in the core subjects.
- Pupils say they feel safe and valued. The new tutorial system enhances pupils' well-being, and helps to improve their attendance and progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and behave well. The attendance of all groups exceeds the national average.
- Leaders closely monitor all aspects of school performance, but current systems do not allow them to analyse group performance quickly.
- The process for formally identifying pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities is still in its infancy.
- In a few lessons, work is not precisely matched to pupils' needs. When this happens, pupils lose concentration and progress slows.

### 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?**

- Improve teaching and learning so that all pupils can achieve their best by ensuring that teachers use assessment information to match work to the needs of pupils of different abilities more precisely.
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
  - streamlining systems to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the whole school so leaders and the proprietor can check the progress, attendance and behaviour of different groups of pupils over time more easily
  - building on the recent work, in collaboration with the trust, to formalise the process for identifying pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and governors have a clear, ambitious, long-term vision for the school. This states that, as 'custodians of a community trust, we want to raise aspiration and empower Asian women, through education, to become more confident and ambitious'.
- The principal has strategically strengthened leadership at all levels, while successfully promoting the school within the local community. The links made with the trust create greater opportunities for pupils and have improved accountability. More pupils now attend the school.
- Leaders continually evaluate the impact of their work. Their evaluation of their own effectiveness is candid, accurate and coherent. The development plan addresses the issues leaders identify. Leaders are successfully improving outcomes for all pupils.
- Leaders ensure that all of the independent school standards are met, including those that were not met at the last emergency inspection.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is highly effective. Clear monitoring processes, including observations, work scrutiny, peer observations and quality audits mean leaders know where strengths lie. Where practice is less secure, leaders' actions have brought about significant improvements.
- Leaders have successfully introduced a new assessment and feedback policy. Teachers record strengths, improvements, targets and actions. Inspection evidence shows that it is now well established. Staff are familiar with the system and pupils say it is useful in helping them to improve their work.
- Staff are helped to develop because leaders arrange training that addresses their needs well. Leaders use performance management effectively to drive standards higher.
- Staff morale is high. Staff are a cohesive group who feel valued and proud to work at the school. They acknowledge the support they receive and the improvements they have seen under the new leadership team.
- Parents were universally positive about the education their children receive. They all said that their children are safe, and the school is good at keeping them informed. The vast majority would recommend the school to another parent.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum that provides a good balance to support their personal development, extend their knowledge, and has sufficient focus on literacy and numeracy.
- The core curriculum is enhanced through other subjects, such as personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, Arabic, Urdu, citizenship and Qur'anic and Islamic studies. Pupils are able to gain a wide range of qualifications, including GCSE and BTEC. In key stage 4, most pupils take full GCSE examinations in at least eight subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils benefit from PSHE education alongside a range of trips, and visits from outside speakers. Assemblies and collective prayers help to develop pupils' strong sense of spiritual and moral values. Inspection evidence showed pupils to be polite, respectful, conscientious and caring. Additionally, pupils display good understanding of different faiths and cultures, as

evidenced by the impressive displays on Judaism and Christianity.

- The student council, where pupils' suggestions are considered by leaders and acted upon, exemplifies fundamental British values, including democracy. The inspector saw some exceptional and impassioned speeches from candidates on 'election day', especially from the 'For the People' representative who reminded the audience 'I am one of you.' Pupils listened respectfully and supported the speakers. One pupil assisted and encouraged another speaker by advising her to 'slow down a little'.
- Pupils' involvement with the inter-faiths council, their local and global charity work, and their increased activities with the local community develops their self-confidence, empathy and self-esteem. The school has enjoyed recent growth, and success, in sport. It is close to making history by being the first school with an Islamic character to become Midlands' champions at five-a-side football. All serve to broaden pupils' perspective of the outside world highly successfully.
- Currently, no pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where staff identify pupils not making expected progress, they investigate cases individually. Leaders provide support to help these pupils make the progress they should. Case studies show that this has been successful in the past, and pupils who have had trouble with learning have made good progress and attained well. The special educational needs coordinator from the trust has been working with the school recently to help them to formalise their assessment processes, which are still at an early stage of development.
- Leaders' close monitoring allows them to monitor and improve all aspects of school performance. However, their systems do not allow leaders to gain a clear picture, quickly or easily, of how particular groups are performing.

## **Governance**

- The governing body has a clear vision for the school. Governors have overseen many changes successfully since taking over in March 2016. This includes their work to raise aspiration among Asian women and see them empowered through education.
- Governors check leaders' actions routinely to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Governors increasingly challenge leaders' work to ensure standards are maintained.
- The chief executive of the trust is an associate governor. Her knowledge and experience adds depth to the governing body.
- The principal reports to the trust, providing a useful additional layer of governance that improves accountability.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure, and governors check, that all of the pre-employment checks for staff are carried out and recorded precisely.
- A well-planned induction programme ensures that staff receive valuable information about their responsibilities to protect children. School policies, including the safeguarding policy,

are available on the school website, up to date and reflect the latest statutory guidance.

- Pupils and their parents appreciate the pastoral care provided by the school. The one-to-one sessions pupils have with teachers cover attendance, progress and well-being. They also provide a firm foundation for safeguarding pupils as they allow teachers and pupils to spot issues that may need subsequent intervention.
- The curriculum effectively informs pupils about some of the potential risks to their safety. Pupils spoke about the usefulness of recent sessions on signs of radicalisation, arranged or forced marriage, honour killings, and female genital mutilation.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers use high-level questioning skills to gauge pupils' level of knowledge well. In both mathematics and religious education lessons, teachers continually ask 'and what else?', 'where?' and 'which means?' – pushing pupils to answer in more depth. This probing helps pupils to cement their knowledge and extend their skills.
- The good subject knowledge that teachers display allows them to ask challenging questions that capture pupils' interest. Pupils are attentive and curious. The strong relationships they forge with staff help them to feel secure enough to ask for help, raise questions, and confidently articulate their views.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and refuse to accept sub-standard work. When this happens, pupils are asked to redo work and teachers follow this up. Teachers continually remind those pupils with poor presentation skills of the standard of work expected. Pupils rise to the challenge; their work becomes neater, and leads to significant improvements over time.
- Teachers are good at explaining difficult concepts. In mathematics, the teacher's good use of technical vocabulary and precise explanation of a tangent helped pupils to avoid misconceptions. As one pupil said, 'We make good progress in mathematics, because the teacher makes you understand everything by explaining it very well.'
- Leaders use homework effectively to raise standards. Pupils now receive more work, more regularly. Pupils say they feel they get a lot of homework, but add that it is meaningful and helps them to reinforce what they have learned in class.
- Pupils are reflective and have the chance to assess their own work. It helps them to develop redrafting skills, so that they learn how to improve their work.
- Teachers cater for their most able pupils and set them suitably challenging work. In a Year 10 English lesson, for example, pupils explained the use of metaphor highly effectively. One pupil thought that Romeo likened Juliet to the sun because, 'She is a dawn of new hope.'
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not check that pupils understand what they are doing regularly enough. Consequently, the work they set is either too easy or too difficult. When this happens, pupils switch off and progress slows.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Risk assessments highlight that pupils' safety is carefully considered and leaders act upon their findings. Health and safety checks are carried out routinely. Processes are thorough. The site is secure.
- The increasingly central role of tutors provides pupils with a trusted first point of contact. Tutors meet pupils individually to discuss their attendance, academic progress and well-being. Pupils value the experience. Leaders' monitoring highlights the positive impact the improved system has made in helping pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- The new house system is used effectively to promote and reward good behaviour. This has had a positive impact on motivating pupils, and created a greater sense of community.
- Fundamental British values are woven throughout the curriculum. The student council instils in pupils the importance of democracy, compromise and equality. The PSHE education programme develops pupils' life skills well, as well as broadening their outlook.
- Pupils' increased leadership raises aspirations, while helping pupils to develop their communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills. The head girl and deputy head girl are powerful role models. Other pupils aspire to follow their lead.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know how to stay safe. In a recent internet safety session, they were advised to be careful when opening emails, never to text strangers, and to inform an adult if someone they did not know contacted them via the internet.
- While leaders have successfully increased pupils' access to sporting and enrichment activities, more is needed to give pupils the breadth they need. The principal described his ambitious plans to develop the choir and the drama provision.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In the vast majority of lessons, pupils behave in an exemplary fashion. They are conscientious, concentrate hard, listen attentively and respect the views of others.
- Attendance across all year groups is very high. The overall attendance is above the national average. No group of pupils within the school is below the national average for attendance.
- There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Those that are recorded represent relatively minor infringements. Leaders track behaviour closely on a pupil-by-pupil basis.
- Pupils from all year groups spoken to by the inspector said that behaviour in lessons is good. Virtually all of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire said that pupils' behaviour is good. As one parent commented, 'My daughter is very happy at this school. She is doing well in mixing with others and progressing well.'
- In a very few lessons, where teachers do not carefully match work to meet pupils' needs,

a small minority of pupils do not display the same high levels of behaviour as their peers. This was mostly seen in Year 8 classes.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' prior attainment, on entry to the school, is often below the national average. Some pupils arrive with minimal formal education experience. Leaders' rigorous assessments of what pupils can do when they arrive help teachers match work appropriately to meet pupils' needs. The vast majority make good progress from their starting points.
- In 2016, nine pupils in Year 11 successfully took GCSE examinations. Pupils' overall attainment last year was broadly in line with the national average. In religious education, psychology, Urdu, citizenship and Islamic studies, pupils attained well above national averages. The vast majority of pupils in these subjects achieved good grades, indicating consistently strong progress over time.
- Last year, pupils' progress from starting points was either in line with or exceeded national averages in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieved a good pass in these subjects was slightly below the national figure. However, small cohorts can be misleading; the difference actually represented one pupil.
- Pupils read fluently and confidently with good pronunciation and use of intonation. Pupils are encouraged to read widely. In tutorial sessions, pupils discuss what they have read recently. Pupils display a wide-ranging knowledge of different genres and authors. They confidently and maturely discuss sensitive issues, including rape, domestic violence, equality, drug abuse and bullying, as they summarise and evaluate the key messages from the books they have read.
- Most-able pupils attain well and make good progress. Last year, the proportion of pupils who achieved either A or A\* grades was very high in some subjects, including religious education, Urdu, Islamic studies and citizenship. Current pupils show accelerated progress because the work they are set challenges them to achieve well.
- Current pupils make consistently strong progress across most subject areas. This is particularly the case in mathematics and key stage 4 English. Work is well matched to pupils' needs. A work scrutiny of Year 9 English showed pupils' well-developed use of punctuation, and mature composition. Pupils' extended writing demonstrated their good use of literary techniques; improved use of tense; strong application of imagery; and greater development of sentence structure.
- Regular testing using past papers from the examination boards shows that the vast majority make accelerated progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who arrive speaking English as an additional language receive intensive support. Individual programmes build on what pupils already know, and help them to overcome barriers to learning. Teachers' records show pupils' consistent improvement over time.
- Staff support pupils well with their applications to further education when they leave the school. Pupils progress onto suitable courses at post-16 level. Sessions with international artists, and visits from an accountant, a lawyer, the police, representatives from the Royal Navy, a radio worker and National Health Service employees successfully give pupils a broad understanding of possible career options.

## School details

Unique reference number	136023
DfE registration number	874/6003
Inspection number	10033606

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 19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Saqib Rehman
Chair	Tariq Nawaz
Principal	Michael Wright
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,700
Telephone number	01733 331433
Website	<a href="http://www.iqraacademy.org.uk">www.iqraacademy.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:mwright@iqraacademy.org.uk">mwright@iqraacademy.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	19 November 2015

## Information about this school

- Iqra Academy is an independent day Muslim secondary school for girls that opened in September 2009. It is registered with the Department for Education to admit up to 205 girls, aged from 11 to 19 years. Currently, there are no girls in the sixth-form provision. The school admits Muslim and non-Muslim pupils. All current pupils are from the Muslim community.
- The school's proprietor is a single individual. There is a local governing body, which includes the chief executive of the Thomas Deacon Academy Education Trust as an associate governor. The principal also reports to the trust board.



- The school was last visited for an emergency inspection in November 2015. This was the result of a qualifying complaint. At that time, not all of the independent school standards were met.
- The previous full inspection took place in February 2014, when the overall effectiveness of the school was adjudged to be good and all of the independent school standards were met.
- The school does not use alternative providers, or agency staff.
- The school does not receive any pupil premium funding.
- No pupils have education, health and care plans, statements of special educational needs or any current identification of having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A new principal has been in post since June 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning in 13 lessons, including English, mathematics, science, art, religious education, information and communications technology, home economics, Arabic, Qur'anic studies, and English as an additional language support. Two observations were carried out jointly with a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the proprietor and governors, the chief executive officer of the trust, senior leaders, a parent, and staff. The inspector scrutinised minutes of governors', leaders' and trust meetings.
- The inspector met with a group of eight pupils, which included representatives from each year group.
- The inspector considered the views of the 19 parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire and the seven parents who contributed their views via the free-text service, and the results of the school's own parental surveys. The inspector also reviewed the staff questionnaire completed by 17 members of staff.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. He carried out a tour of the premises, and scrutinised a range of documents. These included the required policies, records of the checks made on staff, curriculum planning and records of behaviour and attendance.
- The school's tracking of pupils' progress was evaluated, both in lessons and of their social and personal development. The inspector looked at a range of pupils' work and spoke to pupils in lessons. The inspector carried out a detailed work scrutiny to evaluate progress over time.

## Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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