

Unity Girls High School

22 Village Way, Willesden, London NW10 0LN

Inspection dates

5–7 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths. The school has declined since the last inspection. However, leaders are aware of the areas that need development.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe.
- Teachers are skilled at questioning pupils to develop their understanding and they plan activities that engage pupils and help them learn.
- Leaders ensure that pupils celebrate their own culture, respect the beliefs of others and understand British values. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their future lives.
- The curriculum engages pupils' interests and is broad. Pupils of all abilities have opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through an excellent extra-curricular programme.
- Leaders and teachers check pupils' progress regularly. Pupils identified as being at risk of falling behind receive additional support and catch up.
- Pupils behave very well. They are polite, respectful and positive ambassadors for the school.
- Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points. This is because the teaching and support they receive are tailored closely to their needs. Pupils make particularly good progress in English, mathematics and history.
- Pupils' extended writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are limited. As a result, pupils' writing is not as strong as their speaking and reading skills.
- Leaders do not systematically check the impact of all aspects of their work.

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?

- Leaders need to ensure that:
 - the curriculum helps pupils to improve their writing skills
 - teachers' assessment of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar is of consistently high quality to enable pupils to improve their work
 - clear systems are in place to routinely check the impact of their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school. This is shared by staff, who have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Leaders understand the school's priorities. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and take responsibility for driving forward improvements. Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been successfully addressed.
- Leaders have a clear moral purpose, including raising pupils' aspirations, which permeates through the school to develop and educate girls.
- The headteacher effectively tracks pupils' progress throughout the year. Staff work regularly with other schools to check that the school's assessment information is accurate.
- Teachers enjoy their work and feel valued and supported. They appreciate their opportunities to develop as professionals.
- The rich curriculum contributes successfully to pupils' progress, behaviour, personal development and welfare. The curriculum provides a broad range of courses and opportunities, such as work experience, that prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- The school is rightly proud of the extensive and wide-ranging extra-curricular programme it provides. These activities enable pupils to develop additional skills and qualities. The vast majority of pupils take part in these enrichment opportunities. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about 'survival training' with the British army, visits to the theatre and taking part in a 'mock trial' at the Courts of Justice.
- British values are strongly promoted through the curriculum subjects, assemblies and tutor-time activities. Through effective partnerships with other schools, pupils learn about other faiths, cultures and equal opportunities. Their sense of tolerance and fairness is well developed.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fully integrated into all aspects of school life. Pupils are reflective and caring of each other. They have a well-developed sense of social responsibility, which is evident in the community work they undertake.
- Leaders are not ensuring that writing across the curriculum is as strong as it should be because they do not routinely check the quality of writing over time.
- Leaders' checking of the work of the school in a few aspects is unsystematic. This means that senior leaders cannot check robustly the impact of their work on improving pupils' personal development or on developing pupils' literacy.
- The headteacher ensures that the school meets all of the independent standards.

Governance

- The headteacher is responsible for the governance of the school. She has ensured that all the independent school standards have been met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders ensure that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school and that all staff know and understand their responsibilities in relation to keeping pupils safe.
- A comprehensive safeguarding policy is available on the school's website which meets all requirements.
- Staff are well trained, which enables them to have a good understanding of what to do when they identify safeguarding concerns. Leaders also ensure that staff are sensitive to issues in the local community that may affect their pupils' welfare and know what action to take if pupils are at risk.
- Working relationships between staff who have specific safeguarding responsibilities and outside agencies are strong in order to safeguard pupils' welfare. Staff work effectively with parents and carers and external agencies when pupils need support.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and are sure that any concerns they raise will be dealt with swiftly. They speak with confidence about the many ways they are taught to keep safe, for example when working online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have established a teaching and learning environment where pupils can flourish and make good progress. There is a clear sense of enjoyment and willingness to work collaboratively with peers and teachers.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make good use of assessment criteria to plan lessons well. Where the quality of teaching is high, teachers use effective questioning to enable pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers know pupils' starting points and use the information to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' knowledge of what pupils know and can do means that the work is sufficiently challenging. In this way, pupils develop a deeper understanding of the work covered.
- Teachers meet leaders' expectations for the assessment of pupils' work so that pupils improve their work swiftly and make good progress. However, pupils' progress is limited when teachers do not check sufficiently that pupils complete all tasks successfully.
- Teachers do not consistently address pupils' incorrect spelling, punctuation and grammar. This means that some pupils do not make good enough progress in their writing.
- Pupils generally take pride in their work and their books are well presented.
- Teachers set homework thoughtfully to challenge pupils, particularly the most able, and extend their learning beyond the classroom.

- The school has a clear assessment policy and pupils' achievement is assessed several times throughout the school year. Those pupils who fall behind are given additional support in order to make improved progress.
- Pupils read well – the majority with accuracy and fluency. Written work is less well developed across the curriculum because literacy skills are not consistently promoted across the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- An excellent community ethos exists in the school. This is built on care, support and respect for teachers, staff and pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are confident and keen to participate in a wide range of learning situations, for example visiting the seaside, playing dodgeball and completing first-aid training.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain through assemblies, tutor time and the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about the British values of democracy and the rule of law through discussions in history and educational visits.
- Pupils receive effective and impartial careers advice and guidance which support them when they make important decisions about their futures. They spoke highly of the quality of the work experience placements they undertake and visits to careers fairs and universities.
- Pupils talk to adults with confidence and exude a sense of pride in their school. Pupils value the many opportunities they have to give feedback to staff about their education and feel their 'voice' is actively encouraged and heard.
- Pupils feel safe and speak articulately about how teachers keep them safe. Pupils said they are taught how to keep safe online and how to manage risk, for example when they may find themselves in difficult situations. Pupils who spoke to the inspector showed maturity when talking about radicalisation, extremism and knife crime.
- Pupils said that bullying does not happen and they are very clear that staff in the school would help them if they have any problems. They said the school is 'like a big family'.
- Parents are very positive about the school. One parent who spoke to the inspector commented that the school 'goes above and beyond to support the girls'.
- Leaders' overview of pupils' uptake of activities is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all pupils make the most of the valuable personal development opportunities in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have put effective behaviour management systems in place. Pupils are clear about the school's expectations of their conduct when in school and when representing the school in the community.
- Pupils are very courteous, respectful and engaging when speaking to staff and visitors to the school.
- The proportion of pupils who have behavioural issues is extremely low. This is because pastoral support for pupils' personal development encourages pupils to manage their behaviour effectively.
- Whole-school attendance is above the national average. Where pupils' attendance is poor, the school undertakes effective work with these pupils and their families to raise expectations and tackle any barriers.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes are good because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time is strong. Pupils' work shows that pupils make consistently good progress across most subjects at both key stages.
- The headteacher has a good system for measuring pupils' progress from their starting points. The analysis shows that individual pupils achieve equally well across all subjects. However, the small size of the cohort makes year-on-year analysis of outcomes for different groups of pupils unreliable.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment because they take appropriate qualifications and achieve well. The overwhelming majority of pupils go on to study A levels.
- The vast majority of pupils make good progress compared with their peers, regardless of their starting points. This is due to the good quality of teaching they experience and the fact that teachers plan for pupils' individual needs well.
- Pupils who have starting points below the national average make particularly good progress in English and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	137784
DfE registration number	302/6015
Inspection number	10020781

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	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Noor Bashir
Chair	Noor Bashir
Headteacher	Noor Bashir
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,000–£4,500
Telephone number	07730747680
Website	www.ugh.org.uk
Email address	info@ugh.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2012

Information about this school

- The Unity Girls High School is an independent secondary day school for girls.
- The school provides education for girls between the ages of 11 and 16.
- The school is situated in temporary accommodation in Willesden, in the London Borough of Brent.
- The school does not use any off-site training or alternative provision.
- There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- The school was established in 2009 for Muslim girls living in London.
- The headteacher is the proprietor.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2012 under the name Dar Al-Huda High School for Girls.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of subjects throughout the school and reviewed pupils' work. Observations were made of pupils' behaviour during breaks and lunchtimes, at lesson changeover times, in assembly and during registration.
- Documentation, policies and the school's practice were scrutinised, with particular regard to behaviour, bullying, safeguarding, welfare and health and safety.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and several members of the school staff.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally and formally.
- The inspector met with two parents.
- The inspector considered the views of four members of staff who completed Ofsted's staff survey.
- The school is operating from temporary accommodation. The school is planning to move to permanent accommodation by September 2018.

Inspection team

Sarah Parker, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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