

Mazahirul Uloom London School

241–243 Mile End Road, Stepney, London E1 4AA

Inspection dates

4–6 December 2018

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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are now met.
- Leaders are taking some of the right actions to improve the school. However, the headteacher needs further support to deal with the school's weaknesses more effectively.
- Trustees are not doing enough to hold senior leaders to account for the impact of their work. This includes how well leaders evaluate the school's effectiveness and ensure that strong improvement planning is in place.
- Leaders do not check on pupils' progress from their different starting points. Their focus is mainly on attainment at the end of Year 11.
- Although teachers are now more closely monitored and better trained than in the past, inconsistencies in teaching quality remain.
- Some teaching does not challenge or support pupils well. Pupils are not given time to improve their work or close gaps in their knowledge.
- The curriculum has been further developed with the introduction of new courses at GCSE. However, some subject content and planning, for example in physical education (PE) and drama, do not help pupils to deepen their knowledge and skills.
- There are few extra-curricular activities to complement pupils' studies.
- Pupils' writing skills, including their use of accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation, are not being developed effectively.
- Pupils' punctuality for the beginning of the school day is not good.

The school has the following strengths

- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe. They have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils say that the school is much improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 11 is improving.
- Staff morale is high. They feel well supported.
- Pupils' attendance has improved. It is in line with the national average.
- Overall, teachers are using a better range and quality of resources in their teaching.

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 the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - trustees providing more support and capacity for the headteacher so that the school’s weaknesses can be addressed more effectively
 - leaders at all levels rigorously evaluating the impact of the school’s work, including pupils’ progress from their different starting points
 - leaders using their self-evaluation to ensure that there is a strong school improvement plan in place that trustees can use to hold leaders to account
 - implementing a whole-school literacy strategy to help pupils improve their writing skills, including their spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - developing the curriculum by deepening the subject content taught, for example in PE and drama, and following through with plans to relaunch extra-curricular activities
 - further improving the training given to teachers so that they can more effectively meet the different needs of their pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make the progress of which they are capable by:
 - adapting teaching to challenge and support pupils more effectively, helping them to become more resilient learners
 - consistently and effectively encouraging pupils to use and spell subject-specific vocabulary accurately in their written work
 - giving pupils the opportunity to improve their work and checking that pupils have closed the gaps that they have in their knowledge.
- Improve pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving pupils’ punctuality for the beginning of the school day
 - ensuring that pupils engage more effectively in their learning, consistently producing high-quality and well-presented work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including trustees, do not rigorously evaluate the impact of the school's work. For example, although teachers are now more regularly observed, these observations are insufficiently focused on the progress that pupils are making over time from their different starting points. Leaders' focus is mainly on attainment at the end of Year 11 in GCSE examinations.
- As a result, the school's approach to improvement planning is not well developed. Trustees have not ensured that they hold leaders to account for the quality of improvement planning.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent and effective approach to improving pupils' writing skills. Pupils do not write with confidence and accuracy across different subjects, including English.
- Leaders have widened the GCSE curriculum on offer since the previous inspection. For example, they have introduced business studies. Pupils have access to the range of curriculum areas outlined in the independent school standards, including art and drama as part of their creative curriculum. However, some subject content is not sequenced effectively to ensure that pupils develop and deepen their knowledge and skills. This is particularly the case in drama and PE. Also, leaders have not been successful in engaging pupils in extra-curricular activities. Leaders plan to relaunch some activities, including taekwondo, at the beginning of next term.
- The school's effectiveness has improved since the previous inspection and leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are now met. They have successfully overhauled the school's approach to safeguarding. They have put in place systems to improve behaviour and they have delivered more effective training for teachers. However, leaders know that teaching is not good overall and that there is still variability across different subjects.
- Staff are much more positive than in the past about working at the school. They told inspectors that the school is improving, they feel better supported and are part of a team. They say that their training is better. For example, they are regularly observed and given feedback, as well as being able to observe other teachers.
- Leaders have a clear commitment to improving provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have benefited from a range of external speakers, including, for example, from a charity that represents the British armed forces. However, while pupils benefit from some visits, such as to the Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court, there are few extra-curricular activities to promote pupils' broader social and cultural development.
- Guest speakers, school visits, assemblies and the personal, social, economic and health (PSHE) education programme all combine to ensure that pupils have a deeper understanding of fundamental British values. One pupil commented, '...not just "tolerate", that implies we have dislike; we are taught to understand where people are coming from'. Another pupil then responded, 'A person is a person.' These reflections and views echoed those of other pupils.

Governance

- Trustees visit the school regularly to help shape their views on the school. They receive a regular report from the headteacher, including a commentary on safeguarding.
- Trustees' focus has been on improving GCSE results and ensuring that pupils are safe. They have not been rigorous in reviewing the effectiveness of the school's improvement strategies. They have not ensured that there is sufficient depth to the school's self-evaluation and strength of purpose in improvement planning. This limits their ability to hold leaders to account for their work.
- The headteacher has not had enough support to add capacity and expertise in addressing the school's weaknesses. Trustees plan to address this.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have undertaken a wide range of successful work to ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible. Leaders work well with the local authority. They contribute information to professionals in a timely way and they keep adequate records about child protection concerns.
- Leaders have updated the safeguarding policy to reflect the latest statutory guidance. This policy is on the school's website. Leaders share the latest guidance with staff and 'test' staff on their understanding of it. Staff know their pupils well. They know the signs of abuse to which they should be alert. While they were able to talk to inspectors about a range of safeguarding topics, on occasion, their knowledge was not as secure. This was the case, for example, with regard to 'county lines' and the danger of criminal exploitation of children.
- Pupils say that the school is a much safer place than at the time of the previous inspection. They talk positively about the changes that have been made by the headteacher. They say that corridors are calm, bullying is very rare and behaviour is improving. There were only a few replies to Parent View, Ofsted's survey. However, a survey of parents and carers by school leaders show that most parents strongly agreed or agreed that their children were safe and well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent, as is the progress that pupils make over time.
- Teaching does not give effective support to pupils in developing their writing skills, including using and spelling subject-specific terminology confidently and accurately.
- Some teaching insufficiently adapts planned work to meet the different needs of pupils. For example, most-able pupils are not helped to tackle more difficult work quickly, and lower-attaining pupils do not get enough time and support to close the gaps that they have in their knowledge and to improve their work.
- Some teachers do not demonstrate consistently high expectations for the quality of their pupils' work and its presentation.

- Where teaching is more effective, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to break down topic areas and to give clear explanations on the subject content. This helps pupils to understand what they are learning and proceed with their work confidently.
- Some teachers make effective use of a range of commercially produced resources to plan lessons and to assess pupils' learning.
- Some teaching provides pupils with appropriate support. On occasion, pupils struggle with work and do not receive the guidance that they need.
- Teachers take regular opportunities to challenge stereotypes and to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils talk confidently about a whole range of issues relating to equality and diversity. They are also given regular opportunities to work together and to help each other with their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some teaching does not help pupils to become the resilient learners that they should be. Some pupils leave work out when it is too difficult, whereas others are not given the opportunity to rise to new challenges.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils say bullying is now rare and they feel safe at school. Pupils talk confidently about what they learn in PSHE education and from assemblies and say that this helps them talk about and debate the world around them. For example, pupils at key stage 4 speak eloquently about how democracy and law work in Britain. Pupils in a Year 8 history lesson engaged well in looking at the arguments 'for' and 'against' the Suffragette movement.
- Members of the school council speak positively about the impact of their work. They feel listened to and can give examples of changes that they have been able to make, for example a change to the lunch provider. Pupils in Year 11 also take on roles as prefects. They enjoy the responsibility that this gives them.
- Pupils benefit from a range of impartial careers advice and guidance. As well as all pupils hearing from guest speakers, including paramedics and the fire brigade, key stage 4 pupils visit careers events and take part in work experience.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' overall punctuality at the beginning of the school day is not good and is often poorly excused by saying, for example, that they 'woke up late'.
- Some pupils do not take enough pride in their work. Also, when work is too hard or too easy, some pupils lose concentration and come off-task.
- During madrasa in the morning, teachers are inconsistent in ensuring that pupils use the time well.

- Behaviour in corridors is much improved. Pupils move around the building safely and they now get to lessons more quickly. Incidents of serious misbehaviour are rare.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. This is consistent across all year groups.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes are improving, particularly by the end of key stage 4. The proportion of pupils who gained a strong pass in English and/or mathematics has increased. However, there are still inconsistencies between different subjects over time. For example, in the 2018 GCSE examinations, pupils' attainment in Arabic was weak, whereas attainment in history rose sharply when compared to 2017.
- The progress of current pupils is mixed. For example, pupils make stronger gains in subjects such as history than they do in science. In some subjects, including PE and drama, the curriculum is not planned sufficiently well to ensure that pupils have deep knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils' writing skills are insufficiently well developed. They do not spell and use subject-specific vocabulary as well as they should. This often goes unnoticed and uncorrected by teachers. Teachers across the curriculum do not give sufficient help to pupils to support them in learning how to write at length.
- Pupils have stronger speaking skills. This is because teachers give time for pupils to discuss their learning and to work together. Pupils read regularly and with confidence.
- Due to the effective programme of careers advice and guidance, all Year 11 pupils successfully moved on to further study, mainly to school sixth forms or colleges.
- Overall, despite weaknesses in skills such as writing and spelling, pupils' personal and academic development prepares them for life after their time at the school.

School details

Unique reference number	133307
DfE registration number	211/6391
Inspection number	10055530

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	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mazahirul Uloom London
Principal	Imdadur Rahman Al-Madani
Headteacher	Khalil Goddard
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,900
Telephone number	020 7702 8533
Website	www.mul.org.uk
Email address	info@mul.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–5 October 2017

Information about this school

- The school is an Islamic secondary day school for boys. It is located above the Mazahirul Uloom Masjid.
- In October 2017, at the school's previous standard inspection, it was judged to be inadequate, having failed to meet a number of the independent school standards.
- In April 2018, a progress monitoring inspection took place where the school was judged not to be meeting all the independent standards that were checked during the inspection.
- No pupils currently at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Most pupils are of Bengali heritage.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2017, just prior to the previous inspection. He oversees the secular curriculum. The principal has overall responsibility for the school.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection was unannounced.
- After the inadequate judgement at the full standard inspection in October 2017, the school submitted an action plan. This was accepted by the Department for Education (DfE). In April 2018, a progress monitoring inspection took place. The school did not meet all the independent school standards that were checked at that time. Leaders submitted a second action plan. This was rejected by the DfE in August 2018.
- This inspection also included monitoring the progress that the school has made in meeting the independent school standards that were judged not to be met at the previous monitoring inspection. This was therefore also the school's second progress monitoring inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the trustees, principal, headteacher, other leaders and staff. Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils, formally and informally. The lead inspector also spoke to the local authority 'Prevent' duty officer.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and reviewed the school's assessment processes and curriculum planning. Inspectors observed learning in a wide range of lessons, some jointly with the headteacher. An inspector also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's single central record of pre-employment checks, school policies, records about pupils' behaviour and attendance, and other documents related to safeguarding.
- There were two replies to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. However, inspectors reviewed the school's latest survey of both parent and pupil views. Inspectors reviewed 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted Inspector

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