

# Ghausia Girls' High School

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

## Inspection dates

12–14 March 2019

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	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The trustees and governors have not ensured that all independent school standards are met consistently.
- The high turnover of governors, school leaders and staff since the previous inspection has had a detrimental effect on the school's performance.
- Leaders have given insufficient thought to the school's key stage 3 curriculum. This means that pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for key stage 4.
- The frequent changes of headteacher and teaching staff have meant that any improvements implemented have not been embedded.
- The quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent and variable. Leaders' efforts to ensure consistently good teaching have been hampered by frequent changes of staff.
- Staff absence, reliance on part-time teachers and unfilled vacancies mean that leaders are not able to offer a suitable range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits to enhance the school's curriculum.
- Governors have not paid sufficient heed to addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Their time has been taken up with the recruitment of staff and ensuring the financial viability of the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They get on well together, are keen to learn and have high ambitions for their futures. Almost all pupils move on to further and higher education.
- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are polite and considerate. They show respect towards teachers, visitors and each other.
- Staff morale is good. Current staff enjoy working at the school.
- Pupils are well cared for and safe. Teachers make sure that pupils are aware of potential risks to them, both online and in the community.

### 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 leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes for pupils by:
  - developing more detailed curriculum plans, particularly at key stage 3, which set out clearly the essential knowledge leaders want pupils to acquire
  - regularly checking on the effectiveness of the curriculum and making any necessary changes to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of individuals and groups of pupils at the school
  - providing teachers with subject-specific training and support to help them plan learning to better meet the needs of pupils
  - setting out clearly the school's measures and benchmarks of pupils' progress so that leaders have a more accurate view of how well pupils are achieving.
- Provide pupils with more activities which enrich the school's curriculum and further promote pupils' personal development.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders were quick to rectify the minor unmet standards identified at the start of the inspection. These did not pose a health and safety or welfare risk to pupils, nor did they impact on pupils' academic progress.
- Over the past two years, there has been a high turnover of leaders, governors and staff. This has hampered leaders' efforts to address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the school has not improved since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have failed to put suitable plans in place to respond to any unforeseen gaps in staffing and so minimise their impact on pupils' learning. Furthermore, leaders have not reflected on how they can improve rates of recruitment and retention so that they secure a stable staff.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's weaknesses, as well as its strengths. However, like governors, they have been distracted by the challenges of changes in staffing, falling numbers of pupils on roll and securing financial stability. Each successive headteacher appointed has not stayed at the school long enough to securely embed any changes they have made.
- Leaders have not established sufficiently effective systems to gather information about pupils' progress across the curriculum. This hampers leaders' ability to respond swiftly to any emerging patterns or trends in pupils' performance and put suitable actions in place.
- The school offers a suitable academic curriculum, which enables all pupils to gain GCSE qualifications. Teachers are adept at seizing opportunities to incorporate cross-curricular learning into their plans. For example, in English, pupils have studied a novel about a teenage refugee who comes to England from Ethiopia. In computing, pupils have been encouraged to apply their mathematical knowledge when learning how to use spreadsheets.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on the impact of their behaviour on others. In citizenship lessons, pupils drafted letters to the prime minister, setting out their concerns about the impact of the government's policy on immigration.
- Leaders keep up-to-date records and logs, including incidents of poor behaviour. These logs record incidents and their outcomes in detail.
- Leaders have provided teaching staff with training to help them do their jobs well. However, frequent changes of personnel have hampered the impact of this training and support on improving the quality of teaching across the school.

### Governance

- Governors have made some changes to improve their effectiveness. Governors have been dealing with a number of pressing issues since the previous inspection. Issues, including staffing, numbers of pupils on roll, finance and the buildings, have all required governors'

attention. This has limited governors' capacity to focus on the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

- The frequent changes of headteacher have made it difficult for governors to effectively hold senior leaders to account. Moreover, governors have not had access to sufficient, reliable information so that they can ask appropriate and suitably challenging questions.
- Governors have prioritised the recruitment of leaders and staff who have the necessary qualifications and experience required. However, they have struggled to retain these leaders and staff.
- The governing body has ensured that the school's safeguarding policy pays due regard to the most up-to-date guidance from the Secretary of State. Governors have made sure that this policy is published on the school's website.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders carry out routine checks as part of their recruitment processes to reassure themselves that applicants are suitable to work with children. Staff undergo safeguarding training as part of their induction programme and receive further training over time, such as awareness of radicalisation and extremism.
- Pupils trust the adults who work with them in school. They know they can speak to a trusted adult if they have any worries or concerns.
- Across the curriculum, teachers plan activities which raise pupils' awareness of the risks they may face, both online and in the community. Teachers have made sure that pupils know about potential risks, such as grooming and forced marriage.
- Pupils and staff agree that pupils are well cared for and safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the key stages and between subjects is inconsistent and variable. Particularly at key stage 3, the work set by teachers is not consistently demanding enough for pupils, particularly the most able. Moreover, frequent changes of teaching staff, vacancies and staff absence mean that some valuable learning time is lost.
- Teachers prioritise the development of pupils' literacy skills. However, they do not make the best use of time, such as the 'drop everything and read' sessions. These sessions do not provide the support pupils need to enable them to learn to confidently read more challenging texts fluently and with understanding. Consequently, pupils do not develop sufficiently their higher-order reading skills or their ability to read critically.
- Teachers routinely set pupils homework. These tasks help pupils to consolidate their learning and prepare for upcoming lessons.
- In some classes, teachers' plans lack precision about the specific knowledge they want pupils to acquire. Furthermore, teachers' feedback to pupils does not have enough impact on pupils' learning. Moreover, in some classes, teachers miss opportunities to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. This hampers pupils' progress in these subjects.

- Leaders use existing staff, including teaching assistants, to cover staff absence and teaching vacancies. However, they do not provide these teachers with clear plans or suitable training to make sure that these lessons link to pupils' current learning in the subject. Consequently, some valuable learning time is lost.
- In those subjects where pupils make better progress, teachers plan effective lessons which help pupils to learn well. For example, in English and key stage 4 mathematics, teachers provide clear explanations, build on what pupils already know and provide pupils with helpful feedback, which helps them improve their work.
- Weaker teaching, particularly in key stage 3, means that older pupils have some gaps in the essential knowledge required to follow GCSE courses. Furthermore, some teachers have made key stage 4 GCSE syllabus choices without checking whether the school's key stage 3 curriculum has given pupils the prerequisite knowledge. This means that key stage 4 teachers have some ground to make up in a few subjects.
- In English and key stage 4 mathematics, teachers use assessment well to find out what pupils know, as well as to identify any gaps and plan lessons accordingly. These teachers set realistic but ambitious targets, making sure that pupils know what they need to do to make good progress and achieve their goals.
- In addition to face-to-face meetings between parents, carers and teachers, the school provides parents with annual written reports. The quality of the information provided in these reports is variable. The most useful subject reports provide parents with helpful information about their child's attitude to learning, their achievement and the next steps.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- As with other aspects of the school's work, high staff turnover, reliance on part-time staff and staff absence have had a negative impact on pupils' personal development. Leaders have struggled to ensure, as the policies dictate, that pupils visit the local library routinely, exercise at the local gymnasium and contribute to the community through volunteering and fundraising. Moreover, leaders have had to limit the number of trips and visits. There are no opportunities for pupils to participate in tournaments and competitions with other schools. As a result, pupils have not been able to take part in clubs, activities and cultural opportunities or work and play with other pupils from different backgrounds to themselves.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles and responsibilities in school. The school council is not held in high esteem by the pupils. They do not feel that this group has sufficient influence to bring about changes in the school.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They make sure that they are smartly dressed, have the correct equipment with them and take pride in their work.
- Relationships are a strength of the school and pupils get on well with their teachers. They report that they generally get on well together and any occasional fallings-out are resolved swiftly.

- Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen in this school. They are confident that staff would deal effectively with any incidents if they occurred.
- Staff make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. The school's curriculum incorporates lessons about risks, both online and in the community. The school invites visitors into school to further promote key messages, such as spotting potential signs of grooming.
- The school promotes British values. Pupils took part in a local event to mark Remembrance Day. In their citizenship lessons, pupils learn about the judicial and parliamentary systems. Teachers encourage debate around moral and ethical issues, such as immigration. As part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, pupils volunteer in the community, for example helping out with a local charitable group.
- Pupils enjoyed the school's recent 'aspirations week'. Pupils were inspired by the successful women who came to talk to them about their careers, including a personal trainer, a midwife and a counsellor. A visit by Year 11 pupils to Lancaster University helped the oldest pupils to gain a better understanding of what higher education has to offer them.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are pleasant and polite to staff and each other. Pupils are keen to please the adults who work in school and are respectful and courteous towards visitors.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They settle quickly to the tasks set for them, have a go at work even when they find it tricky and are willing to lend a hand.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Despite a decline in the standards of behaviour for some pupils earlier this year, staff have ensured that these pupils' behaviour has rapidly improved.
- Pupils' attendance is good. However, a few pupils are routinely late for morning registration. Leaders frequently remind these pupils of the importance of good timekeeping and follow up on any unexplained absence. Pupils move promptly between lessons so that no time is wasted.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Small year groups, different starting points and changes in the qualifications offered each year by the school make it difficult to evaluate precisely how well pupils achieve at the end of key stage 4 over time. Most pupils join the school working below age-related expectations. From these low starting points, almost all pupils gain GCSE qualifications and move on successfully to post-16 study in local colleges. A number of these pupils move on to higher and further education after A levels.
- Pupils' progress across key stage 4 is hampered in some subjects by a lack of careful curriculum planning at key stage 3. For example, pupils lack the essential historical knowledge to analyse with confidence some of the war-themed poetry studied as part of

the English literature GCSE syllabus.

- In English and key stage 4 mathematics, teachers carefully assess and track pupils' progress over time. They use this information well to help them plan the next steps in pupils' learning. However, in other subjects, teachers do not have as accurate a view of how well their pupils are getting on. This lack of reliable assessment and tracking information makes it tricky for leaders to accurately evaluate how well pupils are getting on from their starting points across the curriculum.
- In English and at key stage 4 in mathematics, teachers set work which challenges the most able pupils. They help these pupils to make up the ground lost at key stage 3 and so they achieve well.
- Pupils' progress in some subjects is hampered by changes of teacher, staff vacancies and absences. Pupils report that on occasion, timetables are changed, lessons are cancelled and time is wasted, for example as new teachers take time to get to know them so that the work set builds on what they already know.
- Generally, teaching in key stage 3 does not have the same urgency as in key stage 4. Leaders' lack of clarity around the essential knowledge to be taught in some subjects means that teachers do not make best use of the time available. Consequently, pupils do not leave key stage 3 well enough equipped with the wealth of essential knowledge they need for key stage 4.
- Some pupils read a very narrow range of books. Although teachers sometimes take pupils to the library or encourage them to choose books from the school library, they do not endeavour to influence pupils' choices. As a result, pupils do not read high-quality fiction, which inspires and enthuses them and broadens their knowledge.
- At key stage 4, pupils make progress across the curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers make sure that pupils secure the essential knowledge set out in the GCSE course syllabuses.

## School details

Unique reference number	131337
DfE registration number	888/6033
Inspection number	10067888

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	27
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Ghausia Girls' High School Trust
Chair	Farhan Khaliq
Headteacher	Bushra Ghafoor
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,500
Telephone number	01282 699 214
Website	<a href="http://www.gghs-nelson.co.uk">www.gghs-nelson.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@gghsnelson.co.uk">admin@gghsnelson.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	13–15 June 2017

## Information about this school

- There has been a high turnover of staff and governors since the previous inspection. The current headteacher is newly appointed. She is the fourth headteacher in less than two years. The proprietor is the Ghausia Girls' High School Trust, which is a registered charity. There are two trustees: one is a member of the governing body, the other the deputy headteacher. A new chair of the governing body is also in post.
- The previous standard inspection took place in June 2017.



- Ghausia Girls' High School is an independent school registered for girls aged between 11 and 16 years. It opened in 1996 and serves the Muslim community in Nelson. It provides pupils with a broad curriculum within an Islamic ethos.
- The school is housed in an end-of-terrace house in a residential area close to the town centre. The property is owned by the Ghausia Mosque Nelson.
- The vast majority of pupils join the school in Year 7 from a number of local maintained and independent primary schools.
- Almost all the girls are bilingual. Most speak English as well as Urdu and/or Punjabi.
- There are no pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school does not use any alternative providers of education.
- The school organises physical education lessons off-site at a local private gymnasium.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice to the school.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school. The inspector checked work in a range of pupils' books.
- The inspector held meetings with a trustee and two governors, including the chair of the governing body, senior leaders and teachers working in the school.
- The inspector scrutinised an extensive range of school documentation, including policies, planning, documentation relating to the leadership and management of the school and information about the progress, behaviour and attendance of pupils in the school. She scrutinised the school's records and systems to check the suitability of adults to work in the school.
- The inspector spoke formally with pupils, as well as informally during the school day, and observed them during breaktimes.
- There was one response to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspector considered the four written responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector made a thorough tour of the school's premises and accommodation.

## Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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