

Inspection of Azhar Academy Girls School

235a Romford Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9HL

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and welcoming school where pupils thrive. They achieve exceptionally well by the end of each key stage. Pupils develop a strong sense of character, purpose and motivation. They show the school's core values through the way they interact with others. Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. They show passion in helping pupils to overcome challenges they may face. The curriculum prepares them for life in modern Britain. Pupils demonstrate a keen interest and success in science, technology and mathematics.

The school is a calm, safe, orderly and respectful environment. Behaviour is exemplary. Records show that bullying is very rare and dealt with effectively when it does happen. Pupils know what bullying is, described by one pupil as, 'Someone trying to make you feel invisible and that you don't have any purpose.'

Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the support, advice and guidance they receive. They feel valued. They appreciate the balance given to Islamic studies and other national curriculum subjects. Many parents rightly share the opinion that leaders respect and listen to their views. Staff help them in learning ways to help their children at home. Parents celebrate the fact that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. It builds on strong groundwork in the early years. Teachers teach pupils to check what they know and remember. They use sentence starters, quizzes and probing questions well. Pupils speak with confidence about their learning. For example, Year 7 pupils describe their predictions, processes and conclusions for experiments they have performed in science. Teachers have expert, specialist subject knowledge, which they enhance through weekly professional development opportunities.

Leaders ensure pupils are confident and fluent readers. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to help them write and spell with accuracy. Adults model correct pronunciation when delivering the phonics programme. They identify pupils in need of additional support in learning sounds and help them to catch up. Staff and pupils show excitement in celebrating World Book Day. They enjoy telling stories and learning about different authors. Teachers ensure pupils are very well equipped in using their reading and writing skills as they move through the school.

The high expectations of pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons are consistently met. Pupils move around the school in a safe and orderly manner. They display mutual respect towards others. Low-level disruptions are rare. Adults inspire pupils to work hard. Pupils are highly motivated and keen to learn. They talk about what they learn with intent and purpose. Pupils make connections with things they have learned in the past. They also link their learning to other subjects to contextualise

what they know and understand. They respond positively to praise. They thrive because staff celebrate pupils' success.

Trips and visits give pupils first-hand experiences of a range of subjects and careers. They are purposeful and provide pupils with memorable events that help them to know and remember more. Pupils use these opportunities to produce high-quality work.

Leaders base the whole-school approach to pupils' personal development on Islamic values. Pupils believe that 'acting upon these values is more important than knowing them'. Active citizenship is a strength of the school. Pupils in Year 10 lead major campaigns across a variety of topics, including child abuse and domestic violence. Leaders integrate enrichment opportunities into the school day. Pupils welcome more opportunities to take part in wider curriculum clubs such as sports or drama.

Staff focus on addressing pupils' well-being, particularly affected by the recent partial lockdowns. Leaders have introduced programmes such as pastoral sessions, nurture groups and mentors. Pupils from different year groups support each other in managing their mental health needs. Children in the early years use 'colour monsters' to express their feelings. Teachers encourage primary-age pupils to think about the things they are grateful for. They describe ways in which adults teach them to 'lift themselves up'. This includes being able to 'give, keep learning, be active, take notice and connect with others'. Pupils in key stage 4 advise staff in understanding how they can help teenagers manage their emotions.

The careers provision is comprehensive and coherent. It underpins the belief that no career or higher educational establishment is unattainable. It provides pupils with wide-ranging opportunities to make well-informed option choices in Year 9. Staff keep registers that help leaders oversee pupils' attendance and punctuality. Pupils' movement from the school is very low. There is no evidence of off-rolling.

The early identification of pupils with SEND is a priority. Leaders involve parents and their children in discussing what is important to and for them to achieve well. They have a very comprehensive knowledge of what pupils with SEND need to learn and to access the curriculum. Staff reduce barriers to learning to give pupils the best possible chances to be successful. They tailor the support to address their specific needs. Staff track pupils' achievements against aspirational targets. They achieve or exceed these high expectations. This is due to the intensive support pupils receive in the early phase of the school.

The early years provision is well staffed and organised. Adults plan purposeful and practical experiences for children to learn. This enables them to talk, respond to questions and deepen their understanding. Staff interact positively with children. They model high-quality language and vocabulary in developing children's communication skills. Children in Nursery use words such as rough, smooth and silvery to describe the materials they feel. They access resources independently. Adults maximise the use of the outdoor area, although limited in size.

The proprietor and governors are unwavering in promoting their vision for pupils. They challenge the 'myths' that may limit what girls can or cannot achieve. They show pride in the well-designed premises provided. Governors know the strengths of the school. They verify what leaders say about the school through lesson visits and discussions with pupils. Teachers feel that leaders support them well. They share the high expectations that leaders have of them and pupils' achievement. They say the workload is manageable and that they work as a team. Parents receive information often about how well their children achieve in all subjects. Leaders ensure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils know how to stay safe online when using social media. They know how to deal with situations of harassment or discrimination should they ever face them. The curriculum covers all aspects of relationships and sex education in line with statutory guidance. Teachers present how 'we are all different' in age-appropriate ways.

The proprietor provides well-maintained premises. Governors oversee school processes to keep pupils safe. Staff know the school procedures for sharing safeguarding information. Leaders have started to refine the system for recording and reporting concerns about pupils who may be at risk. A new electronic school system is in place to achieve this.

Leaders publish the safeguarding policy on the school's website, and it reflects current guidance.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	134417
DfE registration number	316/6064
Local authority	Newham/Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10214684
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	484
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Ismail Gangat
Headteacher	Rookshana Adam (Executive Headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,100 secondary/£2,800 primary
Telephone number	02085555959
Website	www.aags.org.uk/www.aaps.uk.com
Email address	girls.school@azharacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 March 2018

Information about this school

- The primary school site is situated in the London Borough of Waltham Forest.
- Pupils learn in mixed classes up to and including Year 6. The secondary school site in the London Borough of Newham accommodates girls only from Year 7 to Year 11.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Meetings were held with the proprietor, the chair of the governing body, the executive headteacher, senior leaders, a range of staff, governors and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, citizenship and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of curriculum plans and documents, including the school's self-evaluation of the work it does and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by scrutinising records and the single central record, talking to leaders and staff and through discussions with pupils and parents.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day, to gain their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered the opinions of parents and staff through Ofsted's online surveys, including 52 free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View, 62 responses from members of staff and 118 responses from pupils to the surveys.
- Inspectors toured the school sites and looked at policies and documentation to check compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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