

Inspection of Beacon Lights Schools

Rifaiyy Building, Francis Street, Halifax HX1 5JY

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Proprietors, governors and leaders are united in their aim for pupils 'to embody an alignment between fundamental British values and Islamic teachings'. They are succeeding. Leaders have achieved a perfect balance. Staff teach pupils about their religious and cultural Islamic heritage. This is celebrated. They also inspire pupils to take great pride in their status as British citizens. The curriculum for pupils' personal development is outstanding. As a result, pupils have a striking understanding of equality, democracy and citizenship.

Teachers expect the very best from pupils both in their work and conduct. Staff and pupils treat each other, and visitors, with complete respect and courtesy. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. There is no bullying. It is such a pleasure to be in this safe, nurturing environment. Pupils are absolutely flourishing.

Not surprisingly, parents and carers are utterly delighted that their children are thriving personally and academically. Every single comment that parents made to inspectors was positive. All would recommend the school. The many lengthy, effusive written comments from parents are best summarised by this one parent's final sentence: 'Beacon Lights School is indeed a beacon of light to the community of Halifax.'

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

When Beacon Lights opened in September 2020, proprietors set out an excellent strategic plan to deliver an outstanding quality of education. Unavoidable national disruption in 2021, caused by COVID-19, delayed leaders' full implementation of the curriculum. However, what this exceptional leadership team has achieved, in the short period since this school has been open, is quite remarkable.

Leaders started with the national curriculum when they designed their bespoke, well-sequenced curriculum. They then went beyond this to exceed national curriculum expectations.

Most pupils speak English as an additional language. Leaders have made very effective adaptations to the curriculum to ensure that this does not hold pupils back. Even the youngest Year 1 pupils read fluently and with confidence. All pupils read at least as well as they should for their age, and often well above that standard. Staff check that pupils understand the words they read carefully. As a result, pupils' English vocabulary is increasing rapidly in all subjects. This is helping pupils to achieve well, especially in English, mathematics and science. The standard of work that pupils achieve in these subjects at key stage 3 is exceptional. However, leaders are emphatic that they have no wish to enter pupils early for GCSE examinations. They are determined that all pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum.

Curriculum plans in some subjects, such as religious studies, have been fully implemented. Pupils can remember what they have learned about different faiths.

However, the standards pupils achieve in some subjects, such as history, geography and art, do not match pupils' achievements in the core subjects.

There are two formal assessments each year. This helps to ensure that teachers' workload is manageable. Teachers assess pupils' learning during lessons. They use questioning effectively. This helps pupils to improve their work there and then.

Leaders enrich the curriculum regularly by inviting external speakers to present to pupils. They check that all visitors provide unbiased opinions and balanced views. The curriculum for pupils' moral education is outstanding. Pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has adapted the curriculum expertly to meet individual pupils' needs. In addition to supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the SENCo makes further adjustments to the curriculum for pupils who are very new to learning English as an additional language. This includes regular meetings with parents. Several members of staff, including the SENCo, are multilingual. Consequently, they are very well equipped to speak to parents in their first languages. Parents really appreciate this.

Leaders give pupils lots of opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities. Pupils in key stage 3 are invited to support younger pupils. Many pupils speak French as their first language. These key stage 3 pupils enjoy visiting key stage 1 classes to help pupils in Years 1 and 2 who are very new to learning English as an additional language. This helps to build pupils' confidence and pride in their cultural heritage.

The SENCo also adapts individual career action plans to address the needs of each pupil. Materials are adapted to ensure that they are fully accessible for pupils with SEND or those pupils who are new to speaking English as an additional language. Leaders provide high-quality careers education and guidance from Year 7.

Leaders consulted parents when they revised their policy for relationships and sex education. Leaders held separate meetings to discuss this with parents face to face, in their first languages.

Teachers say it is a joy to teach pupils who have such outstanding attitudes to learning. All pupils behave well consistently. It is not surprising that staff morale is so high. Staff say they feel very lucky to work at Beacon Lights Schools. The impact of the inspirational headteacher's leadership in all judgement areas cannot be underestimated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding policy is suitable and complies with government requirements. It is published on the school's website. Appropriate checks are made when staff are recruited. Staff are trained fully.

Staff are appropriately deployed to ensure adequate supervision. Arrangements for handling complaints are fit for purpose. Risk assessments are undertaken thoroughly.

The curriculum is well designed to build pupils' resilience. Leaders have taken account of specific local safeguarding risks. For example, leaders proactively challenge some cultural traditions that keep family matters private. Leaders held meetings with parents to discuss this. Pupils know they must disclose safeguarding matters. Parents are confident that leaders will act swiftly to protect pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- There is some inconsistency in the implementation of curriculum plans across the wider curriculum. As a result, some pupils are not achieving as well as they could in art, geography and history. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans are implemented equally well in all subjects and in all key stages.

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

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| Unique reference number | 147733 |
| DfE registration number | 381/6023 |
| Local authority | Calderdale |
| Inspection number | 10202211 |
| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 14 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 97 |
| Number of part-time pupils | None |
| Proprietor | Abdul Nasir Taj |
| Chair | Kashif Mahmood |
| Headteacher | Yawar Mubarak |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | Primary £1,800; Secondary £2,000 |
| Telephone number | 01422 255883 |
| Website | www.beaconschools.org.uk |
| Email address | info@beaconschools.org.uk |

Information about this school

- This school was registered by the DfE on 2 September 2020. This is its first standard inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Beacon Lights is an Islamic school.
- Proprietors are building new premises nearby. This project is nearing completion. Leaders plan for all pupils to move into the new premises if the Department for Education (DfE) agrees to this material change. Governors will review the building construction completion date before submitting this request for a material change.
- Proprietors plan to request a material change to allow their current Year 9 pupils to move into key stage 4 in September 2022.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the SENCo. They also met the part-time consultant headteacher.
- Inspectors met two of the three proprietors. They also met the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in personal, social and health education, reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers. Inspectors spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors observed pupils reading to their teacher.
- Inspectors visited lessons, looked at curriculum plans and evaluated pupils' work in several other subjects.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of evidence presented by the school to show how they are meeting the Gatsby career benchmarks. They discussed careers education with pupils. Inspectors met a wide range of pupils in different year groups, including the secondary school council representatives.

- The lead inspector consulted the local authority's designated officer for safeguarding. Inspectors met the school's safeguarding and pastoral teams. A range of documentation, including safeguarding records, was evaluated to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The lead inspector toured the building to ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the independent school standards. They evaluated a range of documentation linked to first aid, risk assessments, and health and safety. This included external reports from a fire protection inspector in the West Yorkshire fire service.
- Responses to Ofsted's parental, staff and pupil questionnaires were considered. Inspectors also spoke to parents as they were taking their children to school.

Inspection team

Tracey Ralph, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Garry Stout

Ofsted Inspector

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