Inspection of Sapience Girls Academy

319 Waterloo Street, Glodwick, Oldham OL4 1ER

Inspection dates:	6 to 8 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	**Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to attend this ambitious school. Pupils are highly motivated. They focus intently on their academic work. Pupils have a strong determination to succeed in all that they do.

Pupils are highly respectful to staff, visitors and each other. Pupils have positive relationships with staff who support them to thrive. Pupils care deeply about, and have a strong connection to, their peers.

Pupils' behaviour is praiseworthy. Absence is exceptionally rare. Pupils are passionate about discovering new learning. They are conscientious learners who respond exceptionally well to staff's high expectations for their behaviour and achievement. Pupils learn well across the different areas of the curriculum.

The promotion of strong moral values, including respect for faiths other than Islam, is a golden thread that run through everything that the school offers. Pupils have a detailed understanding of the main principals of the major world faiths, including Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

Pupils pursue their interests and develop their skills through the extensive range of extra-curriculum activities available to them. They apply themselves wholeheartedly to these activities. Several pupils are accomplished artists. Many pupils enjoy writing short stories and poems, some of which have been published. Pupils like to participate in Nasheed (singing) and various team sports, including netball.

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

The school has created a curriculum which matches the ambitions of the national curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from an exciting and stimulating curriculum, which supports their learning well in a wide range of subjects.

Teachers check what pupils know and understand carefully before moving them on to new areas of learning. Teachers are suitably trained. They deliver the curriculum well in most subjects and classes. However, some areas of the curriculum are evolving. For example, a small number of subjects have been recently added to the curriculum. In these subjects, teachers are honing their skills and developing their expertise. Due to this, some pupils are not achieving as highly as they could in these subjects.

There is a strong reading culture in this school. Staff have thought hard about the novels and poems that they want pupils to experience. This includes books from the traditional cannon of English literature as well as the work of contemporary African American, Asian and European authors. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading. They also have strong literacy skills, which they incorporate into their interesting short stories and poems. Pupils discussed their love of reading and shared their favourite books.

The school ensures that those pupils who find reading difficult quickly gain the knowledge and skills that they need. This enables these pupils to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils with SEND are catered for well. Pupils' additional needs are identified early. The school works effectively with a range of experts, and parents and carers, to ensure that these pupils get the support that they need promptly. The additional support for those who find aspects of learning difficult is carefully organised. It ensures that pupils with SEND have access to the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Typically, pupils enjoy debating issues with their peers in class. They have an absolute thirst for enhancing their understanding of the world. Pupils are welcoming and polite. They help to create a purposeful school environment, which is both studious and good-humoured.

Pupils benefit from a structured programme of careers advice and guidance. They have a precise understanding of the options available for their future education, training and careers. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. They execute their many different leadership responsibilities diligently. In recognition of their good achievement, citizenship, behaviour and attendance, pupils can become 'Sapience stars'. Pupils benefit from a broad range of visits to theatres, museums and local places of interest. Eco-council members engage in community clean-up campaigns. Pupils deliver food parcels to local families during Ramadan. They like to read to elderly residents in a nearby care home.

Staff feel well supported to carry out their responsibilities efficiently. Staff have the training that they need to contribute effectively to the school's curriculum development. They told inspectors that the school is mindful of their well-being and mental health. Leaders take care not to burden staff with unnecessary work.

Parents speak very highly of the school. They participate in the different academic and social events that take place at school. Parents are especially positive about their children's academic performance and social and cultural development.

The proprietor and governors are knowledgeable about the school's work. They carry out their roles effectively. They are constantly looking at ways to improve the school.

The proprietor, governors and leaders ensure that all the independent school standards ('the standards') are met consistently. They also make sure that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The school makes certain that essential information is available on the school's website, including the school's safeguarding policy; curriculum information; and the behaviour and complaints policies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the proprietor)

- Recently, leaders have added some new subjects to the school's curriculum. In these subjects, teachers are developing their subject knowledge and understanding of how to deliver the new curriculum content well. Therefore, some pupils are not achieving as highly as they could in these subjects. The school should ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to enable teachers to deliver the new subject curriculums effectively.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	149339
DfE registration number	353/6009
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10299268
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	75
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Sapience Girls Academy Ltd
Chair	Manzoor Ahmed Shakir
Headteacher	Kishwar Naaz
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,000
Telephone number	0161 652 8563
Website	www.sgacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@sgacademy.org.uk

Information about this school

- This is the school's first standard inspection. The school was registered by the DFE on 7 February 2023.
- Prior to this school opening, the predecessor school Iqra High School operated from the same premises. The proprietor body asked the Department for Education to remove this school from the register when Sapience Girls Academy opened.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- Sapience Girls School is located in the Glodwick area of Oldham. It operates from one site and the majority of teaching takes place on this site. Physical education is largely taught at a nearby sports centre.
- This is an Islamic faith school.
- The school is registered for up to 100 pupils.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and the two deputy headteachers. They also held meetings with staff, including those responsible for attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with staff responsible for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with members of the proprietor body and governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector discussed reading with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector met with parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also reviewed responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school premises with the headteacher and a deputy headteacher.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maria McGarry	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024