

# Islamia Girls' High School

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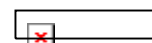
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### Introduction and summary

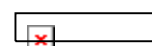


### Purpose and scope of the inspection



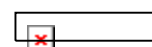
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

### Information about the school



Islamia Girls' High School is an independent Muslim day school that caters for girls of any ethnic and cultural background. It was set up in 1984 by the local community in response to concerns over the preservation of the Islamic identity of Muslim girls. It is situated in a quiet, residential area of Huddersfield and occupies two adjacent sites, both connected to local merchant families as far back as 1686. It provides secondary education based on National Curriculum subjects, with the addition of Islamic studies, Arabic and Urdu. At the time of the inspection, there were 14 pupils on roll, aged 11 to 16. The school aims to be a caring school, dedicated to the best quality of education and personal development for pupils. Its curriculum *'aims to provide the girls with traditional Islamic values, while preparing them for an exciting future', enabling them to become 'confident, caring, well-educated young women, proud to be Muslims'.*

### Summary of main findings



Islamia Girls' High School is a good school. It provides a secure and thoughtful spiritual environment in which pupils can learn and make progress. The headteacher, staff and governors have created a happy, caring community based on mutual respect and outstanding commitment to

good quality education. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Teaching is very good. Teachers have effective procedures in place to assess pupils' standards and monitor their progress. The health, safety and welfare of pupils are promoted very well. The quality of information provided to parents is good and parents give overwhelming support to the school.

### What the school does well

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- it is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in a way that empowers them to grow into responsible British citizens confident in their Islamic identity;
- it provides a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and gives them a solid foundation for life;
- it provides very good quality teaching and effective procedures for assessing the standard of pupils' work and monitoring their progress;
- it fosters very good working relationships, encourages positive attitude to learning and promotes very good behaviour; and
- it promotes the pupils' health, safety and welfare in a caring and highly effective way.

### What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

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The school meets all the requirements for registration.

### Next steps

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Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

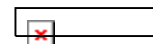
- review the Islamic history components of the schemes of work for Islamic studies to plan the historical skills explicitly;
- develop further the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum;
- develop a more consistent approach to assessment and evaluation; and
- provide a wider range of regular extra-curricular activities.

### Compliance with the regulations for registration

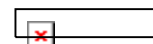
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## 1. The quality of education provided by the school



### The quality of the curriculum



The quality of curricular provision for the pupils' academic, physical and personal development is good. The school follows the National Curriculum enriched with Islamic studies, the Qur'an, Arabic and Urdu. Music is not taught as a subject. Geography is taught in Years 8 and 9 only. French was introduced in September 2002. The pupils have worthwhile aesthetic and creative experiences through art and design (AD), textiles, as well as through nashid (Islamic song) and tajweed (Qur'anic recitation). The school meets its stated aim in the prospectus to provide pupils with traditional Islamic values and prepare them well for their future. It offers a minimum of eight subjects for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), including the possibility of single or double award science.

The school has a clear and detailed curriculum policy enhanced by individual subject policies and supported by a comprehensive assessment policy. It has a well thought-out development plan that enables it to improve methodically. It has adapted suitable commercial schemes of work for National Curriculum subjects, as well as for Urdu, Arabic and Islamic studies. Teachers' long- and medium-term plans are suitably detailed and provide a firm basis for their daily planning. Lesson plans vary in the quality of detail provided from satisfactory to good. The school intends to introduce evaluation of lessons this term. The schemes of work for Islamic studies include components of Islamic history for every year group but opportunities to teach historical skills are not always explicitly planned. Consequently, pupils do not develop and reinforce these particular skills as often as they could.

Provision for all subjects is good. The school has thoughtfully planned the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and a useful range of links between subjects. Links with the Islamic ethos of the school are particularly meaningful when teachers are confident in their knowledge of Islam. Physical education (PE) includes a good balance of games and individual skill development. The school has made appropriate arrangements for swimming lessons at the local pool.

The curriculum is suitably modified for pupils of all abilities. Lesson plans indicate how the pupils' needs will be met and the match of work to their needs is good. There was one pupil with special educational needs (SEN) at the time of the inspection. There was one pupil in the early stages of learning English as an additional language (EAL) and two others at more advanced stages. Provision for these pupils is good because they are assessed appropriately on entry, as are all pupils, and teachers are aware of their specific needs. Furthermore, extra support is given by a bilingual teaching assistant who is involved effectively in planning and assessment. The school has devised suitable strategies to raise the standard of English of all pupils in all subjects. Pupils' progress in this area is good overall. The school focuses on English language and is not currently providing English literature as a GCSE subject.

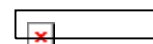
Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. It is taught within the Islamic framework, mainly through a dedicated weekly assembly as well as through science, Islamic studies and Qur'an lessons. Pupils have attended sessions on smoking, drug awareness, healthy relationships and sex education. PSHE is extended through discussions pupils have with a nurse who visits the school once a week. In addition, the school provides a full programme of citizenship taught in weekly lessons.

Careers guidance is provided by the local Connexions service. The school has planned two weeks' work experience in the community for pupils in Years 10 and 11. It also provides internal

opportunities for work experience in response to the wishes of a few parents. Preparation for adult life is further enhanced by the contributions of a wide range of visitors who talk about their professions and give advice on the job market.

The school runs a successful summer club that is open to the local community and provides activities such as walks in the Yorkshire Dales and sports. An educational visit is planned to York at the beginning of the summer term to enhance the history curriculum and another to a local gallery to support the art curriculum. Weekly booster classes are offered in English, mathematics and science.

### **The quality of the teaching and assessment**



The quality of the teaching is very good and is a strength of the school. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils of all ages, aptitudes and abilities make good progress and achieve well. The quality of planning is generally good. For each subject there is a clear framework to guide teachers' planning which ensures that each sequence of lessons builds systematically on what pupils have learnt previously, and enables them to acquire new knowledge and develop their skills and understanding. Individual lessons are planned in a variety of ways, but they all demonstrate that teachers have a clear idea of what they want their pupils to learn. A good range of strategies and practical tasks ensures that they achieve it. In most cases, teachers make pupils aware of the aims of the lesson at the start, and end with a helpful summary of what has been achieved. This strategy boosts pupils' confidence and reinforces their learning. Teachers also plan individual tasks for pupils who are taught in mixed-age groups. A teaching assistant frequently offers well-focused individual help both in class and on a withdrawal basis when pupils need it. This is particularly important for those who join the school with English as an additional language. In all lessons, there is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' literacy and oracy skills. This means that all pupils are able to access the curriculum fully and make good progress over time.

Classes are small. Teachers know their pupils well, and relationships are open and friendly. This provides an environment in which the pupils are encouraged to ask questions and discuss their ideas, and thus they learn to speak well and to develop self-confidence and the ability to work independently. There is a common understanding between teachers and pupils that everyone is at school to work hard, and pupils are expected to behave responsibly and do their best. Lessons are conducted in a purposeful working atmosphere, move at a brisk pace, and cover a lot of ground. The school has adequate resources in most subjects, and teachers use them thoughtfully to increase the pupils' understanding and engage their interest. Resources for ICT are particularly good. Pupils develop good skills in ICT lessons; however, they are not required to use them sufficiently in other areas of the curriculum. The school has identified this as an area for development.

There is a wide range of subject knowledge and expertise among the staff, the majority of whom are at least bilingual. This has a marked effect on the standards pupils achieve. Specialist teaching takes place in most subjects through the flexible use of well-qualified part-time teachers.

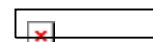
The school has a good range of effective procedures for assessing pupils' achievement and progress in all subjects. To start with, all pupils are assessed in English and mathematics when they join the school. Despite considerable turbulence in the recent past affecting numbers on roll, the quality of education has improved consistently, as reflected in the recent GCSE results. These examination results suggest that the school compares favourably with other Muslim schools and with local authority schools. However, they relate to a very small group of pupils and comparisons can only be made with great caution. Regular testing occurs in some subjects such as mathematics and science and mid-term reports are drawn up by all subject leaders. Written work including homework is marked regularly, although this is often just with a tick to indicate if work is completed. However, class groups are small and as a result pupils receive daily feedback in class about their performance in individual subjects. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, pupils indicate that their

teachers' comments show them how to improve. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss the progress of each individual, and remedial action is taken where necessary.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**



The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good and is clearly reflected in pupils' very good behaviour and working and social relationships. Pupils are calm, courteous, respectful, considerate, helpful and very well behaved at all times.

The school enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through planned curriculum opportunities, teaching strategies and pastoral care. Their Islamic identity is strengthened through the Islamic studies programme and links made to Islam in most subjects. This is enhanced by nashid singing on certain occasions. Teachers provide many opportunities for oral work which develop pupils' communication skills. For instance, in English, Islamic studies, history and citizenship, they regularly make presentations, carry out interviews and experience hot-seating and role play. Pupils' work and rewards earned for good work, attitude or behaviour are attractively displayed in classrooms and corridors, which boosts their self-esteem. Pupils are often given the opportunity to lead assemblies at midday. A Year 11 pupil observed addressing the school on prejudice demonstrated self-confidence, good communication skills and respect for her audience. Her peers displayed good listening skills. Art is seen as a prime subject for developing pupils' self-confidence and self-knowledge as they tap into their inner resources, develop their observation, communication and organisational skills. They are also encouraged to evaluate their work and that of their peers in a relaxed environment. Furthermore, most pupils feel that the school listens to and responds to their views, which makes them feel valued.

Moral education is taught through numerous areas of the curriculum, such as Islamic studies, the Qur'an, English, history, citizenship and pastoral care. For example, in Islamic studies, Year 11 pupils discussed euthanasia from the points of view of Islam and Christianity. In English, they discussed moral values, prejudice and racism in a lively exchange on 'Is Shylock a victim or a villain?' In citizenship, Key Stage 3 pupils complete extensive work on crime and the law. The good behaviour policy encourages pupils to have respect for the learning environment, school and others' property. Pupils feel safe and feel their property is secure in the school.

The school gives pupils numerous opportunities to show initiative. This starts with an emphasis on independent work in all lessons. Pupils have formed a dynamic school council involved in the running of the school, planning school trips, the leavers' party and community activities. They publish a newsletter, 'The Islamia Chronicle', in which they supply information on a wide range of topics, express opinions on various subjects and devise Islamic quizzes. They showed initiative in the latest edition of the newsletter, for example, by running a well-researched article on school inspections, enriched by interviews of staff and pupils. As they move up the school, pupils aspire to the leadership roles of head girl and deputy head girl.

Pupils gain knowledge of public institutions and services in Britain and other countries through a comprehensive citizenship programme. During the inspection, one class listened to a pupil's presentation on the British electoral system and discussed such issues as proportional representation, postal voting and low turnout. They made comparisons with France, Australia and the United States. They expressed their opinions freely and showed respect for differing views. Their understanding of the judicial system and the National Health Service is enhanced by visits

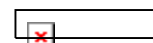
from relevant professionals who talk about their area of work.

The school's provision for cultural education and preparation for life in a multi-cultural society is particularly good. The Islamic studies curriculum includes the study of several aspects of the world's main religions. French was introduced to enhance pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity, especially within a European context. Through art lessons, pupils familiarise themselves with a variety of Islamic cultures and European artists. In history, Year 9 pupils, for instance, learn about 'the Holocaust', 'Black peoples of America from slavery to equality' and Year 7 pupils study 'Islamic civilisations, social and cultural change from the 7th to 16th centuries'. When debating the moral and spiritual issues surrounding euthanasia, pupils showed a sensitive appreciation of the Christian points of view as well as those of Islam. They also recognised the commonality of various religious value systems.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**



The school provides a very safe and healthy environment for its pupils, and their welfare is given a high priority. The governors, headteacher and staff fulfil their responsibilities towards pupils' welfare, health and safety carefully and professionally.

A range of policies and practices is in place to minimise the health and safety risks to pupils and meets the registration requirements fully. For instance, a nurse makes weekly visits to the school, offers advice to all and counselling to those who ask for it, within the framework of Islamic ethics. Child protection procedures are a priority in the induction process for all new staff.

School policies are comprehensive and include anti-bullying strategies, procedures for child protection, health and safety issues, fire-safety and educational visits. The school ensures that risk assessments are carried out for all off-site activities and there is one member of staff qualified in First Aid on the premises, as well as on educational visits. Fire safety checks are carried out regularly and systematically recorded. Smoke detectors are fitted throughout the building and fire exits are clearly marked. Supervision of pupils is effective and consistent.

Policies and procedures to promote good behaviour amongst pupils are in place and parents are satisfied with the school's behaviour management policies.

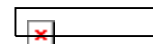
The admission register is kept up-to-date, and the attendance registers are marked assiduously. Senior staff monitor the latter regularly.

The governors and senior managers have considered the provision the school makes for pupils with disabilities and have prepared a three-year plan outlining how the premises and the curriculum will be made accessible to disabled persons.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

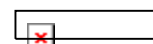


All staff have appropriate checks carried out on them prior to their appointment. However, two recently appointed members of staff are still awaiting confirmation of the checks made by the Criminal Records Bureau for their suitability to work with children. The identity and medical fitness of prospective staff are confirmed. Qualifications are checked and references confirming employment history and suitability for the post are obtained in writing. All staff hold university degrees or higher qualifications and are suitably qualified in the subject they teach.

##### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### 5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school provides suitable teaching accommodation. It is housed in two stone buildings situated in adjacent roads. The oldest building is a converted church. It includes a large PE hall, a science laboratory, classrooms and offices. The school has expanded into a recently renovated building shared with Islamia Muslim Women's College. As soon as refurbishment of a large additional wing is complete, the school plans to move all its classes and equipment there, as these future premises will provide spacious, self-contained teaching accommodation.

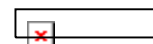
The refurbishment of the shared property has been completed to a very high standard. Most classrooms can accommodate up to 20 pupils each. The specialist accommodation comprises a large computer room, an art room, and a library. The rooms are distributed over two floors, they are bright and in excellent decorative order. The entrance and corridors are decorated with beautiful art and design pieces made by pupils, as well as by posters representing aspects of Islam. The majority of pupils go home for lunch and the few who stay at school eat their packed lunches under the supervision of a teacher. The school provides very good washing and toilet facilities for pupils and staff.

A large outside space has been levelled and prepared for further development as a play area within the local regeneration programme. The school has sensible plans for tennis courts in this space that could also be used by the local community outside school hours. In the meantime, it makes effective use of the local sport and leisure facilities, the community centre and nearby park.

##### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

#### 6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school provides good quality information for parents and others. All the parents completed and returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. They feel well informed about their children's progress

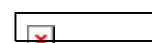


and are comfortable about contacting the school. They receive comprehensive termly information about their children's academic and social development, as well as information about attendance and punctuality. The school operates an open door policy and parents are welcome to visit the school by prior arrangement with the headteacher. The school's prospectus and the parents' handbook give parents and prospective parents a good overview of the work of the school. More detailed information about the school's policies, procedures and practices is made available on request.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**

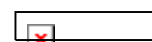


The school has a clear policy for handling complaints. Alongside initial informal measures, there are well-structured formal procedures by which complaints can be considered fairly and objectively. The complaints panel includes an independent member of the local community. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents state that they fully understand the procedures for making a complaint.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**School details**



Name of school:	Islamia Girls' High School		
DfES ref number:	382/6016		
Type of school:	Muslim Day		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	11-16 years		
Gender of pupils:	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 0,	Girls 14,	Total 14
Annual fees (day pupils):	£750 (£400 for siblings)		
Address of school:	Noor Mosque Thornton Lodge Road Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD1 3JQ		
Telephone number:	01484 432928		
Fax number:	01484 432928		
Headteacher:	Mrs Samira El Turabi		
Proprietor:	Mr Muhammad Akram		
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Michele Messaoudi		
Dates of inspection:	11 - 14 April 2005		

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