



Tauheedul Islam Girls High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 135089
Local Authority Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number 295478
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Bowles HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary	School address	31 Bicknell Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Blackburn, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	11–16		BB1 7EY
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	01254 54021
Number on roll (school)	313	Fax number	01254 676 553
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Kam Kothia
		Headteacher	Mr Mubaaruck Ibrahim
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	1–2 November 2006	295478

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

In July 2006, Tauheedul Islam High School for Girls became one of two maintained Muslim schools in the North of England, and one of six nationally. The school has voluntary aided status, and its premises are owned by the mosque. It is non-selective, taking girls between the ages of 11 and 16, mainly from Indian but also Pakistani heritage. Many travel daily from Preston, Burnley and Nelson as well as Blackburn. It has a mission to 'promote a culture of excellence from within a caring and secure Islamic environment, enriched with values of discipline, mutual care and respect, which extends beyond the school into the wider community'.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where students have very good attitudes to learning and are supported very well, so that they make outstanding progress academically and reach high standards. As in previous years, the school's GCSE results in 2006 are far above the average nationally. The school came top of the local authority's list of schools on all measures. The school adds a great deal of value for its students, particularly in academic attainment but also in spiritual and moral development. The commitment to excellence and the values of Islam, which are at the heart of the school, shine out in many ways. Excellent relationships are founded on mutual respect between all who work and study in the school. Students greatly enjoy coming to school. They are articulate, well-informed and eager to contribute to the wider community. An overwhelming majority of the parents is wholly supportive of the school because it cares well for their daughters and ensures they achieve very well. As one wrote: 'I could not have made a better choice for my daughter's secondary education.'

This is also a dynamic school, undertaking major transformation in order to fulfil its vision of being, in the headteacher's words, 'at the forefront in new ways of working and learning'. It currently meets most but not all requirements for the curriculum. This limits students' opportunities to enter examinations in music and design and technology. The school recognises it has able students, but has not placed enough emphasis on getting the very best from them. Teaching and learning, while good overall, are not in every classroom sufficiently active and engaging, nor based on careful assessment of progress. This means that students do not achieve as well as they can, both personally and academically. There is headroom for more students to achieve the higher grades in mathematics and science. Good leadership and management are working hard to strengthen all aspects of provision, and voluntary aided status has been a spur. Substantial and continuing improvements are being made to the curriculum, resources, and the quality of teaching and care, support and guidance show a strong capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the curriculum meets statutory requirements
- Develop the quality of teaching and assessment so that all students, in all subjects, achieve the best they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. The students' progress is exemplary in religious studies, information and communication technology (ICT), English and Urdu. Progress, although at least good overall, is a little more variable in other subjects because teaching is less consistently effective. For example, teaching in science and mathematics, though good, is less proficient in gaining the interest and checking the understanding of the full range of students. Nonetheless, results of examinations

taken by students in Years 9 and 11 in 2006 indicate that students achieved well overall and exceeded their targets. All but one student achieved above expectations at GCSE based on their previous national test results. Local analysis indicates that the school was in the best 1% in the country for the achievement of 14 year olds, even when contextual factors are taken into account. Standards of attainment are consistently well above the national average, and improving. A creditable 69% achieved five or more A* to C grades including mathematics and English in 2006, ten percentage points up on the previous year. Very high proportions of 14 year olds reach Level 6 or higher in English, and above average proportions do so in mathematics and science. The full range of inspection evidence indicates that students gain knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good rate across both key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development is good. Students really enjoy their education and are immensely proud of their school. The school ethos is based on mutual respect within an Islamic framework. Students praise the family atmosphere - 'everyone looks after everyone else'. They feel safe and secure and say that there is little bullying. Any minor incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Through the 'Living Islam' course and other aspects of the curriculum, students understand and interpret their learning within an Islamic context and as a result, their spiritual development is outstanding. The girls are courteous, well-mannered and polite to each other and to everyone else in school.

Behaviour is good. Incidents of low level disruption are rare. Students have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy positive, friendly and respectful relationships with their teachers. Attendance is consistently above average and is steadily improving. Students listen carefully to the good advice they receive about living safely and healthily and try to put it into practice. All students have a voice in school through the student shura (school council) and can see that genuine attention is paid to their views and opinions. They have had a positive impact on the many new developments taking place in school, including making contact with students in other settings. Students also make a positive contribution to the community through the prefect system and many local and national fundraising events. Their high standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT give students a useful preparation for future employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. The students make very good progress because they are highly motivated to achieve their targets and enjoy excellent, supportive relationships with their teachers. Consistency in these features makes a major contribution to the outstanding achievement and standards. A significant proportion

of lessons seen were outstanding and several lessons demonstrated good pace, challenge and variety, highly effective planning and well handled questioning. Teachers' expectations of the quality of students' work are usually high. However, not all teachers move students towards these expectations through a well designed sequence of steps of learning. The range of learning activities is restricted in some subjects. For example, active, practical learning was limited in some science and mathematics lessons. Some teaching relies too much on copying, or less effective use of a textbook or worksheets. Reinforcement and assessment of learning are sometimes perfunctory: the teachers assess what activities have been done, rather than finding out what each student has or has not learned. As a result, they do not identify well enough those students who could do even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Since the appointment of the current headteacher in January 2006, much has been accomplished in remedying the weaknesses in the curriculum identified in the last inspection. Much, though, has yet to be done to lift the overall quality and ensure that all students receive their full entitlement. Although musical activities and textiles lessons are provided for the students, the provision for music and design and technology do not fulfil the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for students in Key Stage 3. As a result, the overall quality of the provision is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the senior leadership team and the governing body have achieved a great deal to widen the provision and to meet the needs of all learners. Physical education has been added for all age groups and French, art and textile technology have been added to the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The school week now provides the recommended number of taught hours and a programme of careers education and guidance is in place. The requirements for work related learning are beginning to be met through work experience for all students in Year 9 and participation in the Young Enterprise Scheme for all students in Year 10. Effective schemes of work are being developed and a programme of extra-curricular activities has been established. Many of these developments have only been in place since September 2006, with others planned, so the impact has yet to be fully appraised. However, early signs are promising and the students are enthusiastic about the opportunities they now have.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its students. Rigorous attention is paid to child protection matters. All adults in school have received the appropriate training and all required checks and procedures are in place to ensure students' safety and welfare. There is an on-going programme of repair and refurbishment to the buildings to ensure that the school provides a safe and healthy environment. The school has plans to develop sporting and outdoor facilities, which are currently limited. New and effective programmes for checking the performance of students have recently been put in place. These are used to identify those students who are in danger of underachieving so that

steps can be taken to give extra assistance. Students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well because of the good support they receive. Satisfactory support is offered to able, gifted and talented students and the school recognises that this is an area for development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with some excellent features. Chief among these are the strong drive for raising achievement and the impressive leadership of the headteacher. Working successfully with all stakeholders to develop a coherent vision for the school in its new form, he has given all concerned the confidence to make changes where necessary to 'develop young women of the highest intellectual calibre... who will contribute morally, socially, economically and politically to the communities and societies they live in'. This has galvanised school improvement and much has been done in the very short time since the school gained voluntary aided status. The development plan is based on an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and is a living, comprehensive blueprint for transformation. It has a clear focus on learning and ensuring equality of opportunity, is sensibly prioritised and is being well monitored. Progress is on track. The senior leadership team supports and challenges the colleagues they line manage, monitors learning and teaching regularly and sets clear expectations. Governors are becoming well informed about their role and how to fulfil their duties. Resource management is highly effective in transforming the environment for learning and investing in staff development, making good use of local authority support and achieving good value for money. The school operates smoothly and safely. Though it currently lacks basic facilities such as a canteen or a library, it is very resourceful in overcoming limitations, as shown in refurbished science laboratories, the provision of new wireless laptops and the growing links with local schools and colleges which enhance opportunities for students. While there is some way to go towards achieving the school's ambitious plans for all round excellence, action to date has had a positive impact. Standards have risen and both the curriculum and teaching quality have, in the eyes of students and parents, improved significantly in a short time. This places the school in a good position to continue to improve.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The Students

Tauheedul Islam Girls High School

31 Bicknell Street

Blackburn

Lancashire

BB1 7EY

1 November 2006

Dear Students

As you know, some inspectors visited your school recently and I am writing to let you know what we concluded. Thank you for all your help during our visit. We learned a great deal by talking with you in discussion groups, in lessons and around the school. I am also grateful to the many parents who contributed their views through the questionnaire.

We think Tauheedul Islam Girls High School is a good school. It has some excellent features, and is making major changes in order to offer you even more.

National test and examination results are very high, and improving. Students in your school make exceptionally good progress, doing better than would have been expected based on earlier tests. Achievement and standards are outstanding.

You develop well as people, too. We were impressed by how much you enjoy school, and how proud you are to be part of it. You develop a strong sense of spiritual and moral values. You and your teachers respect and support each other well, and you are keen to learn: both are important reasons why you achieve so well. You and your parents are overwhelmingly positive about the care and support the school gives you.

Your school is working hard to help you learn and achieve as well as possible, and this has brought changes, some of which you recommended. As well as new subjects, like physical education, you have some extra-curricular activities in which you take more independent responsibility. More remains to be done to give you the full breadth of courses and experiences which you are entitled to. New ways of teaching are being introduced, which involve you more actively in learning. In some lessons, activities are varied and interesting, good questions help you to explain and discuss your ideas, and teachers are checking that each one of you has understood before moving on. We think this is helpful and there should be more of it.

You showed us that you are keen to play an active part in improving the school you love. We wish you all well in the future.

With best wishes

Susan Bowles HMI