

Afifah High School For Girls

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	3586018
Unique Reference Number	134469
Inspection number	316818
Inspection dates	11 -12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheila Ann Boyle

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Afifah High School is an independent Muslim day school owned by the Afifah Trust, a registered charity. It caters for girls mainly of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritages. A small number are of Arabic and Somali origin. The school opened in 2001, received registration in 2005 and moved to its current site in 2007. It is situated in a mainly residential area close to the centre of Manchester. 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 45 pupils on roll, in Years 7 to 11. The school aims to 'nurture each pupil and produce confident, competent individuals who can integrate and contribute positively to British society without compromising their Islamic beliefs'. This is the first inspection of the school.

Evaluation of the school

Afifah High School is an improving school, which meets most of the regulations. The quality of education is satisfactory and it enables pupils to make sound progress academically. Teaching is satisfactory but assessment information is not being used effectively to plan lessons. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good; their social and cultural development is satisfactory. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are safe and well cared for and the provision for their welfare health and safety is satisfactory.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory, being sufficiently broad and balanced to enable students to acquire a wide range of skills and knowledge. In Key Stage 3, the school teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum, except for music and design and technology. It also teaches Arabic, Urdu and tajweed (a melodious style of Qur'anic recitation). In Key Stage 4 pupils have the opportunity to study nine GCSE subjects. They receive careers guidance from Year 10 and have opportunities for work experience in Year 11. The curriculum is planned and monitored satisfactorily in most subjects. However, the school does not have appropriate schemes of work for physical education (PE). In addition, the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties are not always adequately met. A satisfactory programme of personal,

social and health education (PSHE) reflects the ethos of the school. For example, during the inspection a group from Years 10 and 11 attended a careers seminar on Muslim women in higher education and professional life. Resources are adequate in most subjects; however, they are insufficient in quantity and range in science and PE. Consequently, provision for PE and science is inadequate. Provision for discrete lessons in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory, but its use to promote learning across the curriculum is limited to a few subjects. The programme of citizenship is a strength of the curriculum, as it is broad, well planned and taught creatively through a variety of approaches. There are too few educational trips and activities to enrich the curriculum, this fact was noted by pupils in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, although in a few lessons teaching is good. English, mathematics and science are taught by specialist teachers and teachers of other subjects such as Arabic, Urdu, Islamic studies, religious education and ICT are qualified in these subjects. Classes are small and in most lessons teachers quickly establish good working relationships with their pupils. Where lessons are good, teachers have a good understanding of the pupils' learning needs and prior attainment, enabling them to set pupils tasks that provide a high level of interest and challenge. In these lessons pupils are encouraged to work independently and think for themselves. Where lessons are less effective, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan an appropriate level of work and, therefore, some pupils are not suitably challenged and do not make as much progress as they should. The small number of pupils who have additional learning needs do not always receive the support they need. Throughout the school, the marking of pupils' work is too variable in quality as there are few examples of marking which informs pupils how to improve future work. The absence of good quality resource restricts the progress made by pupils in some subjects. In science some of the equipment needed for practical work is not yet installed. This restricts the range of experiences pupils have in these subjects.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good; their social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school's strong Islamic ethos and the teaching of Arabic ensure that pupils develop a very secure understanding of their Muslim beliefs and customs. Through the study of the Qur'an and taking part in daily prayers pupils develop a real sense of identity and self-worth as to what it means to be a Muslim in the modern world. In religious studies pupils gain an appropriate understanding of other religions and cultures different from their own and in citizenship pupils develop a sound knowledge of public institutions and services in England. Pupils are clear on the difference between right and wrong primarily through their discussions on moral issues, which are a common theme in assemblies and in many lessons. Pupils' behaviour is good; they show respect to their teachers and each other. Pupils co-operate well together and are developing the necessary social and personal skills for

life in an Islamic society. However, they have too few opportunities to develop these skills in the wider community or by taking on responsibilities within the school. Pupils say that they would like to be more involved in community activities and in decision-making.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils is satisfactory. All the essential policies and most procedures aimed at safeguarding pupils and minimising risks are in place. On a day-to-day basis, staff exercise vigilance to ensure the safety of all. However, there is no risk assessment for the whole site yet. The school has carried out a satisfactory fire risk assessment and completes the necessary checks. However, the adequacy of fire safety has not been confirmed through a formal fire safety inspection. The behaviour policy is implemented consistently and pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Instances of bullying are rare and students feel safe. Registers are maintained and meet requirements, showing that attendance and punctuality are recorded accurately.

Pupils gain a good understanding of healthy lifestyles through several areas of the curriculum. Healthy eating is promoted practically through initiatives such as 'healthy eating week.' Although the school makes effective use of a local leisure facility for a weekly PE lesson, pupils have insufficient opportunities for physical exercise. The school has appropriate access for disabled persons and it has drawn up a plan to further improve access.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has recently reviewed its procedures for the safer recruitment of staff and meets all of the regulations in this respect. It has compiled a single central register that enables it to monitor that all the appropriate checks are made prior to confirming the employment of all staff.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are suitable in size for the number of pupils on roll. There are specialist rooms for most subjects including a library, an ICT suite, a hall with a prayer area and a science laboratory. A programme of refurbishment of the whole building is almost complete. However, some floors are uneven and potentially hazardous. Equipment to support the teaching of practical science has yet to be installed. There are appropriate facilities for pupils who are unwell but no facilities for changing for PE. There is sufficient space outside for pupils' recreation but very little equipment.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides helpful information for parents and others through its prospectus, a parent handbook, monthly news letters and through twice yearly parents' evenings. However, it does not provide all the information required. It does not make it clear that parents and others may request particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational need and for pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school provides parents with written reports twice yearly; however these reports do not give enough information about the pupils' attainment and progress in the subjects taught.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints were updated recently. They fully meet the regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that schemes of work are produced and implemented for physical education (paragraph 1(2))
- provide all pupils with opportunities to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i))
- ensure teachers take pupils' needs, aptitudes and prior attainment into account when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- ensure that there are sufficient classroom resources to support teaching and learning in PE and science (paragraph 1(3)(f))
- improve marking and ensure assessment information is used effectively to plan teaching so that all pupils make progress according to their capabilities (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- have regard to the DCSF guidance Health and safety: responsibilities and powers (DCSF 0803/2001 by ensuring that there is regular risk assessment of the whole site (paragraph 3(4))

- demonstrate that it has a satisfactory level of fire safety as identified by a report from the local fire authority (paragraph 3(5)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- ensure that all floors are maintained in such a way that the welfare and safety of pupils is safeguarded (paragraph 5(s)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents and parents of prospective pupils are provided with particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))
- ensure that annual reports to parents give them enough information on the progress and attainment of pupils in all subject taught. (paragraph 6(5)).

School details

Name of school	Afifah High School For Girls	
DCSF number	3586018	
Unique reference number	134469	
Type of school	Secondary	
Status	Independent	
Date school opened	2001	
Age range of pupils	11-16	
Gender of pupils	Female	
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Girls: 45	Total: 45
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,000	
Address of school	86 Clifton Street Off Shrewsbury Street Old Trafford Manchester M16 7PH	
Telephone number	0161 872 1516	
Email address	afifah_high@hotmail.com	
Headteacher	Mr H Chunara	
Proprietor	Alfifah Trust	
Reporting inspector	Sheila Ann Boyle	
Dates of inspection	11 - 12 March 2008	