

# Bolton Muslim Girls School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135096
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	329026
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Haney

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	433
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dilaver Vali
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mubaaruck Ibrahim
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Swan Lane Bolton Lancashire BL3 6TQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 361103
<b>Fax number</b>	0

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bolton Muslim Girls School became a voluntary aided school in September 2007. It was the second school in the north-west of England to change from an independent to a state school. Many students come from areas of Bolton that have high levels of social and economic deprivation. The school is much smaller than average. A very high proportion of the students are from Pakistani and Indian heritage families. Almost all students come from families where English is not the first language. The school is heavily oversubscribed. There is a below average proportion of students on the special needs register and a well below average proportion with statements of special educational needs. The proportion of students entitled to a free school meal is higher than the average. The school has achieved the Silver International School's Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Bolton Muslim Girls School has been successfully transformed into a good school with outstanding features. The students' outstanding personal qualities and motivation are key factors in their achieving high standards. The school has made rapid progress since it became a state school thanks to the inspirational leadership of its headteacher and the good support of its board of governors. An area where progress has been slower is in the curriculum. While this has many strengths, the provision for design technology, music and physical education (PE) is too narrow; and at Key Stage 4 the range of examination subjects is not as extensive as it could be in promoting students' future opportunities. However, the transformation of the school is continuing with ambitious targets for the future and reflects good value for money and capacity for improvement.

Students enter the school with overall levels of attainment that are in line with expectations. Outstanding progress is made over time thanks to the excellent quality of the support and guidance; the students' exceptional work ethic; and a good and improving quality of teaching. As a result, standards are well above the national averages by the end of Year 11. Personal development within a strong spiritual framework is given a high priority. This is producing a confident and articulate group of students who enthusiastically say they enjoy their education, feel safe and well cared for. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through a clear focus in many subjects, including life skills and religious studies. Links with other schools allow them to develop an understanding of a multicultural society. Students show courtesy and consideration to others, promoting a sense of calm and purpose. The school is strongly supported by most parents.

The systematic focus on improving the quality of teaching through a continuing professional development programme is improving learning. Teachers provide opportunities for students to work together and interchange views and opinions, building on the outstanding behaviour of students. The school is a strong, mutually supportive community where everyone cares for each other. Students' progress is carefully tracked to provide extra support where necessary and, as a result, individual student achievement is maximised.

The quality of leadership and management is good overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is ably supported by the senior team. This vision of creating excellence is shared by all: students, governors and staff. Everyone knows where they are going and what they need to do to get there. There is a clear strategic plan that is evaluated through internal reviews, such as the frequent monitoring of lessons, and external reports using the local authority and others. Data are used effectively to promote individual student achievement. They are used less effectively to gain an overview of the effects of changes to the curriculum and teaching for different groups of learners. Much valuable work has been undertaken to transform the original buildings, but the school still lacks some basic facilities for subjects such as sport, music and technology. There are also no dining facilities, which is a cause of concern for some parents. However, the school does its best within the considerable constraints.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater breadth to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and extend the learning opportunities in design technology, music and PE throughout the school.
- Analyse and use the school's data more effectively to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Students in examinations in 2008 scored highly and consistently across most of the subjects they took reflecting their strong commitment to their studies. All students gained at least five A\* to G grades and 75% of students gained five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. This was an outstanding achievement as almost all of the students came from families where English is an additional language. A significantly high number of students gained A\* or A grades. Standards in religious studies were exceptionally high, reflecting the importance the school places on spiritual development. In the 2008 national tests at the end of Year 9, standards were high in English and mathematics, but teaching in science was less effective in enabling students to achieve the higher levels. Students' progress accelerates as they move through their courses in Years 10 and 11. Given the students' broadly average starting points, progress over time is outstanding.

Standards in the school are continuing to rise. A high proportion of students in Year 11 have already secured at least a grade C in English and mathematics. Mathematics standards, in particular, are very high, with able students showing excellent confidence and skills in algebra. Standards observed during the inspection and the school's monitoring records show that students are on track to achieve the very high targets they are set. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported through personalised programmes and make similar progress to their peers.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Students work extremely hard and the outstanding personal development and well-being contributes significantly to their exceptional achievement. They are extremely loyal to the school and are friendly and polite demonstrating very positive attitudes in and out of lessons. Mutually supportive relationships exist between staff and students and between the students themselves. Students talk about the 'family atmosphere' that exists and that 'you feel cared for and welcomed'. Their behaviour and attitude towards their studies are outstanding. Attendance is excellent with well above national average attendance figures. The school is not complacent about this, working hard to keep holidays during term time to a minimum and promoting good attendance through a rewards system.

Students recognise and value the opportunities to show initiative and contribute to the local and wider community. They readily express their views through the Shura (school council) where they feel they are listened to and able to prompt change. Students readily give their time to fundraising activities. In addition, some of the older students take the opportunity to be peer mentors, a support mechanism which is appreciated and valued by the younger students in Year 7. Students are very aware of what is needed to live a healthy lifestyle and link this to their Islamic faith, but they do not have sufficient opportunities to exercise through physical education. Students' high achievements in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) combined with other enterprise and work related activities enable them to develop the good personal skills and qualities that will enable them to lead fruitful working lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The school's clear and determined focus on developing teaching and improving learning is bearing fruit as demonstrated by a growing number of outstanding lessons, where teachers encourage students to be active participants in their own learning. A key feature of many lessons is the very productive way that students work together. Lessons are very carefully planned and teacher expectations are often high. Occasionally, teachers do not provide suitably matched activities for all student abilities. Many lessons feature lively activities that enthuse students. Resources are used very well to support learning. The use of interactive whiteboards is particularly effective. Teachers often have very good questioning skills, but sometimes do not use these to fully challenge the most able. Additional support for those with learning difficulties/and or disabilities enables students to make outstanding progress. Good use of key words helps students improve their literacy and oral skills. Teachers regularly check students' learning and have a thorough understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. They make frequent reference to National Curriculum levels and examination requirements during lessons and make it very clear how students can improve their work, although this is not always fully reflected in their marking.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Significant improvements have been made to the curriculum since the move from independent to state sector and there are many strengths. The curriculum is good at developing students' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. It actively promotes students' personal development through interesting themes in subjects such as English and humanities, and there are good opportunities for students to focus on developing lifestyles and their spirituality. The introduction of a topic-based approach in humanities in Year 7 is adding enjoyment and ensures the curriculum has relevance. Students themselves value the recent introduction of subjects such as art and food technology. However, some aspects of the curriculum are in need of further development because they are too narrow. Specifically, the students' experience of the design technology curriculum lacks breadth, affording limited access to resistant materials. Provision for music and PE is also somewhat limited, with students having only one hour of physical education per week, which is below the government guidelines. The school is widening students' choices year-on-year to meet their needs as it improves the facilities for specialist subjects. However, the curriculum in Key Stage 4 remains relatively narrow in terms of promoting students' future opportunities. Enrichment and extra-curricular provision are satisfactory but improving as the school extends the range of visits, visitors and other activities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school promotes a strong sense of community where everyone is kept safe. The quality of care is outstanding. Students say, 'there is always someone to turn to in confidence when we have a problem'. Consequently, students are confident learners and willing to take on challenges. Arrangements for safeguarding students are robust and procedures for health and safety are well managed. There are excellent partnerships between home and school. High quality support mechanisms exist with outside agencies to ensure that students with issues that may inhibit

their progress are well supported to achieve challenging targets. Through a well-structured careers education programme students are well informed about their career options. The outstanding induction arrangements help those new to the school settle quickly. Thorough guidance programmes support Year 9 students and their parents in making important option choices.

A key factor to students' success is the setting of very challenging personal targets and the regular tracking of progress. Teachers quickly identify where students are not making anticipated progress and make adjustments through personalised support programmes or in the courses being studied.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has shown great drive and outstanding leadership in developing the school. At a time of extensive change in personnel he has gained the cohesive support of staff and students in an ambitious programme to make the school a centre of excellence. The school provides a secure learning environment where students of all abilities have an equal opportunity to succeed in achieving very high targets. All staff are committed to improving the quality of education. There are good structures and systems that accelerate the progress of students. The school is self-evaluative and uses knowledge of individual students to ensure learning programmes help them make progress. However, achievement data are not drawn together effectively to provide a clear view of the relative achievement of different groups of learners. This limits the school's ability to evaluate the overall success of whole-school initiatives. The school is making good progress in fostering community cohesion. Students are developing a good understanding of what it means to live in a multicultural society. Governors challenge and support school leaders effectively and their work has enabled a rapid development of new facilities. There are still aspects of the curriculum that remain to be implemented, despite the school's current large budget surplus. Governors acknowledge that further development is needed to improve the curriculum.

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## Annex A

**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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	1

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Bolton Muslim Girls School, Bolton, BL3 6TQ

Thank you for the way you welcomed us into your school. We appreciated the friendly way you spoke to us and the good manners you displayed.

We judge your school to be good overall, but there are also some things that are outstanding. You are achieving high standards in your work, particularly in English, mathematics and religious studies. We think your progress in learning over time is outstanding. We are also impressed with the way you work together, concentrate in lessons and the way you demonstrate outstanding personal qualities. You can be proud of the way you behaved and showed your school at its best.

The care, support and guidance provided by the school are outstanding. Staff know what needs to be done so that you make the best progress and are keen to make sure you succeed. You told us that teaching is good and we agree with you.

There is an area where we felt the school needs to do more. At the moment, there are limited opportunities for you to study music and there is not enough time given to the teaching of technology and physical education. We would also like to see a wider range of subjects for you to take examinations in when you get into Year 11.

We found the school to be very well led and managed. In particular, the leadership of your headteacher is outstanding. He has overseen a dramatic improvement in the school's environment and the quality of what is offered to you. The school has lots of data on how well you are doing and uses this effectively to provide support in lessons. However, we feel the school can do more with this to give a better overview of how the school is doing, and where further improvements can be made.

We wish you all the best for your success in the future.