

Tauheedul Islam Girls High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135089
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	341616
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Wareing HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kamruddin Kothia
Headteacher	Mr Hamid Patel
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and observed 19 teachers. They also held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students, parents and a local authority representative. They observed the school's work, and looked at: the school's student tracking and performance data; improvement planning; records of students' participation, behaviour, attendance and exclusion data; and 172 parental questionnaires, 297 student questionnaires and 39 staff questionnaires.

- the attainment and achievement of particular groups of students
- evidence of improvements in key aspects of the provision
- the overall quality of teaching and its impact on learning
- the impact of the school's specialist status on whole school improvement
- the effectiveness of leadership and management and its influence on the quality of educational provision and outcomes for students.

Information about the school

Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School is one of two maintained Muslim schools in the north of England and one of six nationally. The school has had voluntary aided status since 2006 and its premises are owned by the mosque. It is a smaller than average, non-selective school for girls between the ages of 11 and 16. Most students are of Indian heritage with a small proportion of Pakistani heritage. The school draws students from neighbouring towns as well as from its immediate location in the centre of Blackburn. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. In June 2008 the school was awarded humanities specialist status, with citizenship as its lead subject, and humanities and English as the other specialist subjects. In September 2008, the school entered into partnership with a local college to provide sixth-form education.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School is an outstanding school. Its mission is the promotion of, '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'. All members of the school community live out this vision in the daily reality of their lives in school. One student's comment is typical of many received by inspectors: 'Teachers are not just teachers, they are our friends. We are one family and the unity and togetherness is brilliant.' The school's strong spiritual ethos is palpable and permeates all that the school does. The principal and senior leaders have established a culture of high expectations and the school does excellent work, in collaboration with a very wide range of partnerships, to support students' outstanding achievement and personal and spiritual development.

Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly average to below average. By the time they leave school they reach exceptionally high levels of attainment and make outstanding progress. Over the three years since the last inspection the school has maintained a consistent trend of high attainment and outstanding progress on the part of its students. In 2009 the school's GCSE results again exceeded all national benchmarks and the school's own very challenging targets. There was no significant underperformance by any groups or individual students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities made twice the progress of other students. This reflects the school's significant investment in the achievement of more vulnerable students and is characteristic of its inclusive nature. Current assessment information indicates that students are on track to surpass their targets again this year. The staff know their students very well and provide very effective and integrated academic, emotional and spiritual support that ensures that all students achieve as well as they can.

Despite a number of changes and staff turnover the school has maintained good and sometimes outstanding teaching. The culture of continuous improvement established by the principal and senior leaders places great emphasis on promoting professional development and improving classroom practice. The impact of this policy was seen during the inspection, where coaching had improved several teachers' practice from satisfactory to good. Some departments have developed very effective ways of informing students exactly how to improve their work, but there is some inconsistency between teachers and departments.

The school's excellent track record in maintaining students' outstanding achievement and its determination to meet even more ambitious targets in the future, the

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improvements made since the last inspection and its incisive evaluation of its work all indicate outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend across all departments the existing good practice in giving feedback to students on exactly how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The school makes excellent use of its very sophisticated tracking systems to analyse the results of all students. There is no significant difference between groups and individual students. In lessons seen during the inspection, most students made at least good and sometimes outstanding progress.

Most students feel very safe in school and know who to approach for help and advice when they need it. They say that bullying is rare and that any incidents that do occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Most students enjoy school very much, as demonstrated by their very high attendance and exemplary behaviour in lessons and around school. There have been no exclusions for the past three years.

Students are well informed about the risks of substance and alcohol abuse and smoking. They participate enthusiastically in days dedicated to health and fitness but the school recognises that there is more work to be done to increase students' participation in physical exercise and to provide healthy meal options in school.

Students are very actively involved in the school and wider community. They relish opportunities to stand for election as prefects or members of the students' shura (council). This body has a real voice in the school, for example, by meeting designers to change the school uniform and raising funds for the local hospice and a school in India. Students have also taken the initiative in proposing to organise a Fairtrade or healthy eating tuck shop.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop self-confidence and maturity in their relationships with their friends, teachers and other adults and talk readily with visitors to the school. They learn about their own and other faiths and cultures in 'Living Islam' lessons, religious education, art and citizenship. The impact of the school's specialism can be seen in the many students who express their aspiration to become 'good British citizens'. Many students look forward to the opportunity for quiet reflection in the Friday assemblies. One student echoed the comments of many when she said, 'I feel that the school is preparing me very well, both academically and spiritually, for the next phase of my life.'

Students are very satisfied with the guidance and advice that they receive on options for further study and all students progress to further education or another constructive activity on leaving school. Outstanding achievement and personal development means that Tauheedul students are very well equipped for their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons teachers' planning is detailed and they display good, and sometimes excellent, subject knowledge. Teachers have good questioning skills and foster very positive relationships with students. In the best lessons students make rapid progress through opportunities to work independently in groups and pairs. For example, in an English lesson, some groups were asked to discuss a particular aspect of a novel, while others listened and evaluated the quality of their discussions. This promoted very high levels of speaking skills and critical thinking. In the lessons that were merely satisfactory there was too much teacher talk and insufficient feedback for students on what to do in order to improve their work.

The curriculum is outstanding in the way that it supports excellent outcomes for students and is very well tailored to their individual needs. The school has made improvements since the last inspection and found creative ways of delivering music, design and technology and art in cooperation with external partners. The humanities specialist status has supported the introduction of new courses, such as the project-based humanities course for Year 7 and the foundation course for more vulnerable students at Key Stage 3. Year 11 students can study critical thinking and there is early entry to some GCSE subjects. There have been improvements to the provision of physical education with the acquisition of a new gym and play area, although the school recognises the constraints of its site.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Students and parents greatly value the excellent integrated care and support provided by the school. Staff know individual students very well and provide very personalised and focused support. Vulnerable students are identified as early as Year 6 and the school's strong links with outside agencies ensure that staff are highly trained to assess their needs accurately. The involvement of senior leaders and parents in the regular reviewing of the progress of students at risk of failure is an outstanding feature of the school's work. Transition arrangements are highly effective in enabling students to settle quickly into school and prepare themselves to progress into further education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The principal and senior leaders have an ambitious vision for the school and set very clear targets for whole school and individual performance, creating a clear line of accountability throughout the school. The school's excellent examination results over the last three years have been maintained at least in part through the detailed strategic planning that involves governors, staff and parents in key decisions.

Governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and the most appropriate areas for development. They bring much professional expertise to their role and while extremely loyal to the school, they are sufficiently well informed about all aspects of the school's performance to provide a robust challenge when necessary. Their financial expertise in particular ensures that all expenditure is judiciously planned and best value for money secured. Equality of opportunity is central to the school's mission. There are no barriers to learning or personal development. All groups of students achieve exceptionally well because the school monitors all aspects of provision by group, often using independent surveys.

The school's evaluation of its performance, including the quality of teaching and learning, is relentlessly self-critical at all levels and gives it a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Community cohesion is a key priority of the school and it contributes much to community cohesion locally, regionally and nationally, for example, through a local Community Cohesion Forum with the local diocese, other schools, mosques and statutory agencies. The school places particular emphasis on the development of female leadership within the community, providing classes in English, information and communication technology and fitness for women.

Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. All aspects of child protection are treated with

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the utmost urgency by the school. Staff are very well trained to recognise abuse. The school's advice to parents on internet safety and cyber-bullying is a distinctive feature of the school's work and it has contributed to a national conference on the issue of forced marriage.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The response received to the questionnaire distributed to parents and carers before the inspection was high for the size of the school. The school provides a wide range of channels of communication with parents and carers and the vast majority of parents and carers who responded are overwhelmingly satisfied with their children's experience of the school. A very few parents and carers expressed concern about the extent to which the school helps them to support their children's learning. Inspectors found no evidence to support this concern. A similarly small number of parents and carers were concerned about the extent to which the school helps their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found that the school was doing its utmost to tackle this concern, within the limitations of its site.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tauheedul Islam Girls High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 172 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 425 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	105	61	65	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	138	80	34	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	150	87	22	13	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	124	72	48	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	121	70	48	28	1	1	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	109	63	59	34	4	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	42	94	55	4	2	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	108	63	59	34	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	112	65	53	31	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	121	70	49	28	0	0	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	84	49	83	48	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	128	74	44	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	137	80	34	20	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Students

Thank you for your helpful attitude towards me and my colleagues when we came to inspect your school. We learned a great deal from observing your lessons and talking to you.

- Your school provides you with an outstanding education and sets high expectations of you but also supports you to achieve as well as you can.
- Most of you reach very high standards and make exceptionally good progress from Year 7 to Year 11.
- Teaching is good and some lessons are outstanding. You make the best progress when you are actively involved in lessons and allowed to discuss ideas in groups and pairs.
- Your progress is not as good if the teachers do most of the talking in lessons or if they do not let you know exactly how you can improve your work. We have asked the school to make sure that teachers do this in all subjects.
- It was good to hear how safe you feel in school and to see how excellent your behaviour and attendance are.
- Most of you told us that you enjoy coming to school and this shows in your excellent contribution to school life and to the wider community.
- You are well informed about healthy living and many of you take part in sports activities. The school has improved the facilities for sport since the last inspection but they know that there is more work to do in helping you to take regular physical exercise and eat healthily in school.
- You have an outstanding curriculum that helps you to achieve exceptionally well. New subjects have been added since the last inspection, such as critical thinking in Year 11 and a new humanities course in Year 7.
- You are developing an excellent range of skills for your future working life and your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding.
- Senior staff and governors know the school's strengths and what more needs to be done and they are working together to make sure that even more improvements take place.

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to give you our very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

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