

Al Huda Girls' School

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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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.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Information about the school

Al Huda Girls' School is a Muslim secondary day school, located in Washwood Heath, Birmingham. The school opened in 1992 and is located in Victorian accommodation. It admits girls who are 11 to 16 years of age and there are currently 82 students on roll. The vast majority are from Pakistani, Somali and Bengali backgrounds; nearly all were born in the United Kingdom. No students currently have a statement of special educational needs or are at the early stages of acquiring English.

There is a mix of Islamic and secular teaching. The school aims to 'promote equality of opportunity for young British Muslim girls, enabling them to understand and become integrated members of British society.'

High staff turnover still continues to be a feature of the school. The school has engaged consultants to help it with improvement; however, the high staff turnover means that support for the current staff has only been short term.

Context of the inspection

The school's last standard inspection took place in October 2011. At the same time a progress monitoring visit was undertaken. During the inspection the quality of education was judged inadequate and a large number of regulations were found to be unmet. The progress made in implementing the previously accepted action plan was deemed inadequate.

The purpose of this visit was to check whether the school has taken appropriate steps to address the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and to assess the amount of progress made in meeting regulations. The school has updated its action plan since the last inspection. This is the first follow-up visit following the inspection in October 2011, although the school has had four other such visits since 2009.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The school has made inadequate progress in implementing its updated action plan. There has been some improvement and there are now fewer regulations not met,

compared with the number at the last inspection. However, important regulations relating to teaching and assessment, aspects of the curriculum and welfare still remain unmet.

At the inspection in October and also at the previous monitoring visits, there were many weaknesses in the school's schemes of work and their implementation on a day-to-day basis. Students' preparation for their future life was insufficient, and there was a lack of careers planning. A full range of curriculum experiences to meet the required areas of learning were provided at Key Stage 3 but not at Key Stage 4. Information and communication technology (ICT), the only technological subject taught, was not taught in Key Stage 4; the scheme of work did not extend beyond Year 8.

The school's new updated action plan states that all regulations have now been met. It shows that staff have reviewed the schemes of work, ensuring that the subject matter is appropriate for the aptitudes of students and that the planning ensures that they can make progress. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is said to have been broadened. Staff with expertise to teach ICT have been engaged and school leaders are said to monitor planning and students' work. Careers guidance is provided to all students, with particular careers events for students in Key Stage 4.

Since the last inspection, the school and its various consultants have done a great deal to ensure that all subjects now have full schemes of work. Even so, in Year 11 the school has given priority to examination work so that art and ICT are not taught. Subject matter is now relevant for the ages and aptitudes of students. Although planning now enables students to build on what they have learned previously and to make progress, weaknesses in teaching remain; these limit the progress that students make. Careers planning and activities are appropriate and relevant to students' ages and key stage. The school has done more to ensure that students are prepared for future adult life. This includes a wider range of experiences and opportunities in citizenship. However, there are no opportunities in Year 11 for students to use ICT and although students' attainment in mathematics is starting to rise, improvement is still too slow to enable students to be adequately prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment. They have fundamental gaps in their knowledge of mathematics, a legacy of underachievement. Some students' personal development is limited and they are only now being provided with a range of planned experiences to improve their awareness of the world around them. The implementation of these is weak and not all students are sufficiently attentive or involved in lessons. Students confirmed they are concerned about the lack of ICT and the expectation that future college placements may be endangered by their weak skills in this subject.

The last standard inspection and the progress monitoring visits since then found a range of weaknesses in teaching, including a lack of use of information from assessments to plan lessons and to meet the full range of students' needs. The action plan focuses on recruiting suitably qualified teachers, especially in mathematics and science. Training is said to have been undertaken by staff. This has been to help them with the planning of lessons and to provide work which matches

the needs of different students in each class, utilising assessment data. Monitoring procedures are also stated to have been implemented.

Teaching and assessment remain inadequate, although there has been some improvement. There are many teachers new to the school, including those teaching mathematics and science. The school has assigned staff to subjects where they have a strength of knowledge. Planning guidance has been established which helps staff structure their lessons. In most lessons, a variety of activities are included to keep students interested, although they rarely have any opportunity to use ICT. At times, teachers provide long explanations when practical aids such as models or video clips would help. This slows students' learning.

Many staff adhere too rigidly to their prepared plans, reflecting their inexperience, and do not adjust the pace of lessons to take account of how well students are learning. This means that some lessons move on whether students have learned enough or not. At other times, lessons are not adjusted to take account of students who are learning at a fast pace and can do harder work. Overall, lessons are not adjusted to take account of different needs and pace of learning. Staff know that they must set objectives about what different groups of students should achieve. These are not precisely stated in plans and during the lesson staff generally fail to take much notice of them. As a result, most students do the same work. Teachers' understanding of the students' levels of attainment is often not sufficient enough to personalise the activities.

The school's system for keeping track of students' progress is developing but not enough account is taken of their levels of attainment during lessons. In a good example in the teaching of mathematics, students were told of the next steps they needed to achieve to gain a higher examination grade based on an assessment of their skills in the lesson. However, there are many missed opportunities in lessons for staff to check on, and review, what students have learned. There are few times when staff check through students' work or use probing questioning which addresses all students. Few use plenary periods to draw together and assess students' learning. Some moderation of the assessments made in English is taking place but this does not yet extend to other subjects.

At the inspection in October, there were failings in the safeguarding of students' welfare. Not all designated persons for child protection had up-to-date training and not all staff were trained. The procedures for allegations against staff included inappropriate investigative procedures. The systems for staff recruitment were not comprehensive enough and some details and records were not in place. The single central register of staff recruitment and vetting checks was incomplete. The school planned to update all staff's child protection training, complete the single central register, provide more robust recruitment and vetting procedures and improve procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. Senior leaders were to ensure that all procedures were in place so that regulations were met.

The school has successfully updated its safe recruitment, vetting and allegations procedures. All designated child protection staff have up-to-date training. Previously

appointed staff received up-to-date child protection training. However, the school did not realise that new staff needed to have such training and the staff themselves, were not made aware of this. As a result, not all staff are currently trained in child protection. The single central register of staff checks now contains all the information that is required by the regulations.

Although in October 2011 the school had a clear 'graduated' process for dealing with any difficulties caused by students and for recording incidents, it did not consistently complete sanctions records. The school stated in its plan that it would ensure that a log of these was consistently kept. During this visit, there were still incomplete records. The school amended these so that the regulation was met.

In October, the admission register and the complaints procedure did not meet requirements. The register had gaps in the information about its students. The school updated its admission register during the inspection so that the regulation was met. The school now has robust procedures for managing complaints and meets all regulations in that respect.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), as follows:

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that there are full schemes of work for all subjects taught and that these are implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1))
- provide students of all ages with experience in the technological and aesthetic and creative areas of learning (paragraph 2(2)(a))
- provide opportunities for all students to learn and make progress (paragraph 2(2)(i))
- adequately prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (paragraph 2(2)(j))
- ensure that teaching enables students to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3(a))
- ensure that teaching encourages students to apply intellectual, physical or creative effort and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 3(b))

- ensure that lessons use effective teaching methods and suitable activities and appropriately manage class time (paragraph 3(c))
- ensure teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3(d))
- ensure that information from assessments is utilised to plan teaching so that students can make progress (paragraph 3(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of students (standards in part 3) and must:

- make arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school and ensure these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7).

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Muslim girls day school		
Date school opened	1992		
Age range of students	11 to 16 years		
Gender of students	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 0	Girls: 82	Total: 82
Number of students with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day students)	£1,200		
Address of school	74-76 Washwood Heath Road Saltley Birmingham B8 1RD		
Telephone number	0121 328 8999		
Email address	Al_huda@hotmail.co.uk		
Headteacher	Samina Jawaid		
Proprietor	Asif Jawaid		