

# Al Huda Girls' School

74-76 Washwood Heath Road, Saltley, Birmingham, B8 1RD

## Inspection dates

3–5 December 2013

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

**2**

Pupils' achievement

Good

2

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

2

Quality of teaching

Good

2

Quality of curriculum

Good

2

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

2

Leadership and management

Good

2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- Students' achievement is good; they are keen to learn and show good attitudes in lessons. Standards are rising year-on-year.
- The curriculum is highly effective and supports the improving standards across all subjects.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know the students well and they provide interesting learning opportunities which help students to be successful in their lessons. When students fall behind, well-targeted interventions help them quickly catch up.
- Students' behaviour and their personal development are good. They have high self-esteem and can articulate their views with great confidence.
- Leadership and management are good. This is an improving school, with rising standards and high quality teaching and learning. This is because leaders at all levels have clearly articulated their vision and are determined for the school to improve.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- The progress students make in Key Stage 3 is inconsistent. Some students do not make enough progress because teaching does not always challenge them enough.
- Some students are not active enough in their lessons and as a result they are not independent enough in their learning.
- Assessment procedures, while greatly improved, are not always used well enough by teachers when planning for students' next steps in their learning.
- Marking is variable across subjects and year groups.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended by the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 12 lessons, taught by nine teachers within Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. They looked at students' work and held meetings with the proprietor, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior members of staff and groups of students.
- The inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers, members of staff and students.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the school improvement plan, information about students' progress, attendance data and records showing how the school cares for and protects students.

## Inspection team

Jane Millward, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Shahnaz Maqsood

Additional Inspector

Susan Lewis

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Al Huda Girls' School is a Muslim secondary day school for girls aged from 11 to 16 years. It opened in 1992 and is located in Washwood Heath, Birmingham.
- The school currently has 90 students on roll. The vast majority are from Pakistani, Somali and Bengali backgrounds; nearly all were born in the United Kingdom. No students have a statement of special educational needs or are in the early stages of acquiring English. There are no students with a disability or special educational needs.
- The school was previously inspected in June 2013.
- The school aims to 'promote equality of opportunity for young British Muslim girls, enabling them to understand and become integrated members of British society'.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate the progress students make in Key Stage 3 by ensuring that:
  - teaching always challenges students and particularly the more able
  - students develop their independence by creating more opportunities for them to be active in their learning.
- Further develop assessment procedures by ensuring that:
  - work is regularly moderated and judgements are consistently secure
  - students are always clear about what is expected of them in all lessons
  - assessments are carefully used when teachers plan their lessons
  - marking always guides students on how to improve their work and supports students to achieve their targets.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Students' achievement is good; they enjoy their learning and work hard in lessons. Students enter the school with a range of abilities from below national expectations to above what is expected nationally and they make good progress in all subjects. As students progress through the school they develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. As a result, they achieve standards that are above the national average. When they leave school the majority of students achieve a minimum of five good GCSE qualifications, including English and mathematics. Standards are improving year-on-year and more students are achieving the higher grades of A\* and A at GCSE. As a result, both students and teachers are more aspirational about what students can achieve and this is developing a culture of success across the school.

All groups of students make very good progress in their Islamic studies. They achieve very well in Urdu and in reading and writing Arabic. Last year, almost all students achieved a good grade in the GCSE qualification for religious education (RE). Early entry to GCSE examinations has been carefully considered and has helped to improve standards over time.

The progress students make is improving, although it is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. Tracking of students' progress has improved. As a result, teachers have a greater insight into how to accelerate students' progress because they know where students have gaps in their learning. A range of interventions have been introduced where students are given support to catch up with their studies. This is appreciated by the students.

Developing students' literacy skills has been a focus for the school. As a result, standards in English have risen. Students are encouraged to improve and extend their skills through a range of additional activities. For example, more-able students are encouraged to work in groups to create a school newsletter and a reading club is improving students' ability to read fluently and effectively.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. They respond well to the school's high expectations of how they will conduct themselves. This results in a calm, respectful atmosphere in which students learn well. They usually engage well in lessons and disruptions are rare. Students are polite, well-mannered and friendly. There is mutual respect between them and staff, which reflect the school's aims and Islamic values. Activities such as anti-bullying week give students a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Students say they feel safe in school and have confidence that any concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively. Instances of bullying are rare. Students enjoy school and attendance rates are high. The school checks the attendance of each student and has introduced measures to improve the punctuality of those who are frequently late.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result, students have high levels of self-esteem and are able to communicate their views confidently and respectfully. They are able to reflect upon and explore views about challenging and profound aspects of human experience. For example, Year 11 students discussed extremism rationally and objectively, making it clear that such attitudes are never acceptable. The school actively promotes social harmony by teaching students to understand and respect the beliefs of others and by visiting different places of worship. Through citizenship studies and well-planned experiences, students develop an understanding of the nature and institutions of British society and have high aspirations for the contribution they will make to it.

**Quality of teaching****Good**

The quality of teaching is good and enables students to make good progress. Well-judged care, guidance and support results in students who achieve well and are confident in their abilities. Teachers build good relationships with their students and consistently show concern and consideration for them as individuals.

In most lessons the pace of learning is good. Lessons are presented in a way that encourages students to reflect and analyse their learning. Teachers use questions well to deepen students' understanding and activities meet their needs. Students plan work in groups and seek original ways of presenting their findings. For example, students in a Year 9 lesson made good progress when presenting their work on World War I to the class. This is because they were given opportunities to collaborate their learning and use each other's skills. One student stated, 'Teachers motivate me to do well and reach my potential.' In the lessons where teaching was less than good, the pace of learning is slower and students are not always pushed to move on quickly enough. This is most noticeable for the more-able students. In some cases the teacher provides too much direction and, as a result, students are not given enough opportunity to work by themselves. In some lessons students are unclear about what is expected of them and, as a result, they do not always achieve as well as they might.

The quality of marking is not always good enough to make sure that all students know what they need to do to improve their work. Consequently, some students are not clear enough about how to achieve their target grades. However, there are examples of highly effective marking in which students are provided with clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Assessments are recorded of students' achievements. Students' work is linked to target grades and teachers assess students' levels of attainment according to the National Curriculum. However, in Key Stage 3 these are not always secure. Leaders acknowledge that more work is required to ensure assessments and teachers' plans are accurately pitched at the right level all of the time.

**Quality of curriculum****Good**

The school provides a good curriculum that meets all requirements. The curriculum is well designed so that students experience a well-balanced range of subjects. There is a very good emphasis on core subjects, and detailed schemes of work support new and experienced teachers very well in building on prior work. Opportunities for literacy and numeracy to be applied in other subjects are carefully identified. This all contributes to the good and sometimes better progress that students make in their mathematics and English work, and the improving results in these subjects. There are particular strengths in the ways in which students' study of different subjects contributes to their understanding of their own beliefs and those of others, for example through the ways in which they write short stories in English. This is also evident in their understanding of different lifestyles and beliefs in religious education, and in their personal, social, health and education development.

The school has introduced additional qualifications for Year 11 recently, including a GCSE in psychology and an Islamiyat i-learning GCSE. This course has strengthened the school's approach to teaching Islamic studies and builds also on the Qu'anic studies curriculum. Both these courses, while celebrating and deepening the students' knowledge and understanding of their own beliefs and communities, also pay due attention to other faiths and to citizenship and link closely to the good RE curriculum. Students in Year 10, for example, show a developed understanding of family life and religion and how traditions linked to this might differ.

Students study Urdu and Arabic as well as more creative subjects such as art and drama. Physical education is linked well into healthy lifestyles. ICT is taught separately but also used well to support students' access to and interest in other subjects, such as researching topics or compiling

databases in mathematics. Students experience a range of careers and work experience opportunities, including access to independent advice. This and their improving progress and opportunities for independent work all mean that they are well set up for their next steps in education and for adult life.

Clubs and activities after school, such as those for literacy, numeracy and ICT, are valued by students and help those who find these skills more challenging to catch up and to extend their skills. Students say they really enjoy the visits they make within the local community and further afield, such as to the Houses of Parliament.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

**Good**

Students' welfare, health and safety are good. All the independent school regulations are met. Students are supervised well and staff care for the students very well. Robust policies are in place and staff implement them consistently across the school. Safeguarding arrangements are securely in place and the school has correctly checked the suitability of adults to work with students. Staff have been trained at the correct levels to ensure that students are safe. Policies for health and safety, including checks of fire safety, child protection, first aid, anti-bullying and educational visits, are in place. Checks on electrical appliances and procedures to prevent fire are fully implemented, including checks on fire safety equipment and regular fire drills.

Effective policies and procedures promote good behaviour and the prevention of bullying. Students are clear about rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for poor behaviour. Records show incidents of bullying are rare. This was confirmed by the students, who were also confident that if a problem did arise they would be able to talk to a member of staff and the problem would be sorted out quickly. Students report that they feel safe in school.

### **Leadership and management**

**Good**

The quality of leadership and management is good and ensures that students achieve well. The proprietor has a clear and well-directed vision for the school and this is shared effectively with all staff. The senior leadership team share the focus for school improvement and have developed effective systems and procedures. This is supporting the school well and ensuring that the school continues to improve. The senior leadership team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and their skills complement each other very well. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they have clear plans of how to improve the school further. These are helping the school to improve and, as a result, standards across the school are improving.

There is a clear and well-directed approach to improving the quality of teaching. There is a continual focus on this which runs through all improvement plans. Rigorous procedures to manage the performance of staff have been implemented. These include links to the Teachers' Standards which indicate requirements for teachers' practice and conduct. A cycle of monitoring is well thought out and regular lesson observations provide teachers with accurate and informative information of how to improve their teaching. All teachers have action plans to support the improvement of their lessons, which are regularly reviewed. Careful and accurate analysis of students' performance is carried out and scrutiny of students' work informs priorities for development.

All regulations for independent schools are met. The premises and accommodation comply with all requirements and are suitable for safe and effective learning. The school provides all the required information to parents, carers and others. The school website is both informative and the school's complaints policy complies with requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103595
<b>Inspection number</b>	428112
<b>DfE registration number</b>	330/6088

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent School
<b>School status</b>	Muslim girls' secondary day school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	90
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Asif Jawaid
<b>Headteacher</b>	Samina Jawaid
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 June 2013
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£1,500
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