

Al Huda Girls' School

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

Inspection dates

3–5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not good. Students, including the more able, do not make the good progress of which they are capable, particularly at Key Stage 3.
- Teachers do not set work that is challenging enough, especially for the most able students.
- The quality of teachers' marking of regular classwork is inconsistent. Students are given too little guidance about how to improve their work.
- Students' punctuality at the start of the day is not consistently good.
- Senior leaders do not ensure that weaknesses are identified quickly enough or addressed rigorously in subjects and classrooms where teaching requires improvement.
- Teachers are not provided with sufficient opportunities to observe and experience good teaching.
- There is insufficient in-class support for newly-appointed or inexperienced teachers to ensure that effective classroom routines are established quickly and maintained.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' progress from their starting points meets or exceeds national expectations by the end of Year 11. GCSE results have improved significantly in recent years.
- Students' behaviour is mostly good; they take a pride in their school and are keen to do well.
- Students understand and respect the diversity of beliefs and cultures represented in the local and wider communities.
- The school provides a safe and secure environment in which good attention is given to all aspects of students' welfare.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by nine teachers. A small number of these lessons were jointly observed with members of the senior management team.
- Discussions took place with the proprietor, members of the senior management team, a number of teachers and with students. Questionnaires submitted by nine members of staff were considered. A telephone conversation was held with one parent. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online 'Parent View' questionnaire for these to be taken into account.
- A number of school policies were considered, together with evidence of their implementation. Details of students' progress and examination results were scrutinised, as were samples of students' work in the core subjects.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dr Suha Ahmad

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Al Huda Girls' School is situated in Saltley in East Birmingham. The school has an Islamic ethos and all current students are members of the local Muslim community.
- The school provides education for up to 117 girls in the age range 11 to 17 years. There are currently 78 students on the roll of the school. No student has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The ethos of the school is 'one of equality of opportunity for young British Muslims girls, enabling them to understand and become integrated members of British society'. The school aims to 'instil in them a sense of Islamic identity, allowing them to live in today's society as practising Muslims'.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.
- There are currently no post-16 students on the roll of the school.
- The school experiences above average turnover in staff; a number of members of staff have only recently been appointed.
- The school was last inspected in December 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good by:
 - the modelling of good teaching and classroom management in classrooms where the quality of teaching requires improvement
 - providing support for newly-appointed teachers to ensure that effective classroom routines are established quickly
 - improving the quality of marking and how this is used to provide clear guidance to students about how they may improve their work
 - ensuring a consistently high level of challenge in learning activities, particularly at Key Stage 3 and for the most able students.
- Improve punctuality at the start of the school day of those students who regularly arrive late.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3, 3(c) and 3(d)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- The quality of leadership and management requires improvement because senior leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Two of the teaching regulations are not met and, as a result, regulations related to leadership and management are not fully met.
- The proprietor and senior leaders are ambitious for students to do well. They have a clear focus on the achievement of students at the end of Year 11 and have ensured good improvement in academic standards in recent years.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching is regularly observed and appropriate feedback is provided for staff about areas for improvement. However, these arrangements do not provide sufficient support for new or inexperienced teachers. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school is too variable.
- The small size of the school enables all members of the senior management team to know the staff and students well. There are no middle management roles. Arrangements for the teaching of all subjects are shared appropriately between senior managers and subject teachers.
- Senior staff scrutinise the work in students' books. This activity is not robust enough to identify subjects or teaching groups where insufficient work is completed or students are not provided with rigorous advice about how to improve their work.
- Occasional use is made of external consultants to provide an appropriate independent view of how well the school is progressing against the independent school regulations. This activity has not been repeated recently and, as a result, senior leaders do not have a sufficiently rigorous understanding of how well the school is meeting statutory requirements.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity for all of its students; all aspire to achieve well and are supported effectively to fulfil their potential. Senior leaders have ensured that the curriculum prepares students well for life in a diverse society, both in terms of their academic achievement and their personal development.
- Good attention is given to the preparation of students for life in modern Britain; all students take part in elections for members of the school council and members produce their own newsletter. Work in citizenship includes comparison of the features of democratic societies and dictatorships.
- Global awareness events, including a focus on cultures represented within and beyond the school, are used effectively to develop students' understanding of the beliefs and values represented in the wider community. The key features of a number of world faiths are studied throughout Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Students' awareness of major political events, including the recent incidents in France, heightens their understanding of conflict and its impact on communities. Good opportunities are provided for students to contribute to collections for various charities. The school is strongly committed to ensuring that a non-partisan approach is taken to all potentially controversial political issues.
- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that the school is a safe place to work and study. Arrangements for safeguarding students are robust and the management of the premises, including procedures to ensure fire safety, are secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
has a number of strengths. The proprietor is regularly present in the school and contributes appropriately to the review of all aspects of the school's work. He is well informed about the progress of individual students and of the intervention strategies put in place to ensure that students do not fall

behind.

ensures that annual GCSE results are analysed and action taken to address any weaknesses in achievement. As a result, for example, there has been an improvement in recent years in the number of students achieving A and A* grades. The proprietor and senior staff engage well with parents to ensure that students are well supported and motivated to make the most of their final year in school as they prepare for their external examinations.

requires improvement as the school's arrangements for the recruitment and retention of staff are not sufficiently robust to ensure that high quality teaching is continuously maintained in all subject areas. The limited funds available to the school restrict opportunities to reward good teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Their good attitudes to learning, and cooperation with each other and with their teachers, contribute positively to their achievement.
- Students engage well in discussions and respond positively to teachers' questioning. They demonstrate the ability, in group work or whole-class discussion, to listen effectively and to refine their ideas and understanding appropriately.

Students' concentration in lessons is mostly good. However, where the quality of teaching requires improvement, students are not always stimulated sufficiently by tasks and activities to ensure maximum achievement in the time available.

- There is evidence of respect and trust for their teachers throughout the school. There is a positive ethos throughout the school based on mutual respect and harmony. Students are proud of their school and demonstrate a desire to do well with their learning.
- The school makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students develop self-esteem and confidence. They lead assemblies and take on positions of responsibility within the school. They have good involvement in the local community contributing to a range of community projects including a food bank, raising money for a local youth club, and litter-picking in the local area. As part of this project they spoke with proprietors of local takeaway businesses about the contribution of fast-food to obesity within the population.
- The procedures for managing students' behaviour are mostly effective. There have been no serious incidents of misbehaviour since the last inspection.
- Overall attendance is good, but a minority of students are persistently late to school in the mornings.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school provides a safe environment in which each student is known individually and levels of supervision are high. All the independent school regulations related to students' welfare and safety are met.
- Arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff are robust; the headteacher has attended safer recruitment training. The required checks on staff suitability are implemented systematically and recorded on the required single central register.
- All members of staff receive training in child protection as part of their induction and this is updated regularly. The designated lead person for safeguarding is regularly trained to the standard required by the local authority.
- Students demonstrate a good understanding of different forms of bullying. They state that bullying is rare and that any incidents are managed effectively by staff. Incident records verify this view.

- Arrangements for health and safety, including fire safety, are good; the regular routine checks on fire safety equipment are implemented appropriately.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too inconsistent across subjects and between year groups.
- Activities sometimes lack sufficient challenge to ensure that all students learn quickly enough and consistently achieve the standards of which they are capable. In this situation, more able students are able to complete work comfortably and are not sufficiently challenged to extend their learning with harder activities which require them to think deeply and to apply higher-level skills.
- Students are taught in groups with a relatively wide range of ability. Teachers' planning does not always take sufficient account of the range of learning needs in the group. Lessons are not re-shaped sufficiently as they proceed because some teachers do not continuously check students' understanding effectively.
- In those lessons where learning is successful, for example in English, psychology and some aspects of Islamic studies, teachers use oral questioning and discussion very effectively to check students' understanding throughout the lesson. Learning moves swiftly on, and students are engaged and interested in the work covered.
- The assessment of students' progress relies heavily on formal tests at the end of each half-term. The results from this testing are used effectively to identify students who require additional support or challenge with their learning. This is particularly helpful in enabling students at Key Stage 4 to understand the demands of external examinations and to identify weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding.
- Students' achievement at the end of Year 11 is good as a result of teaching which is well focused on the requirements of external examinations. Students at Key Stage 4 are provided with continuous help to revise their earlier learning, including additional help after school and at week-ends.
- The marking of students' regular classwork and homework is not consistent enough. Marking in some subjects, for example English and science, is regular and has a positive impact on students' responses to new work. However, in too many students' books, in a number of subjects, there is work unmarked or simply acknowledged with ticks. The majority of staff do not provide sufficient guidance to help students understand the next steps required to improve their work. Insufficient use is made of targets arising from a careful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in students' written work.
- Inconsistent planning, teaching and marking result in progress at Key Stage 3 which is not rapid enough to ensure that all students are ready for the increased depth of understanding and pace of learning required at Key Stage 4. As a result overall achievement is good rather than outstanding.
- As a result of frequent staff changes, recently appointed or inexperienced teachers do not always succeed in quickly establishing suitable classroom routines, knowledge of individual students' needs and a good pace of learning. While senior managers regularly observe teaching and offer advice and suggestions for improvement, for example in mathematics, they do not model good teaching or work alongside teachers where further development is required.
- Students demonstrate respect for their teachers; throughout the school they are responsive to teachers' expectations and pay attention to instructions. Low-level disturbances or interruptions are rare. Where teaching is effective and engaging, students demonstrate enthusiasm and they help to maintain the good pace of the lesson. In these lessons open-ended questioning, collaboration, reflection and empathy are the norm and learning is good or outstanding.
- The curriculum includes a good range of subjects which ensure that all required areas of learning are taught. Students enjoy the limited opportunities for practical learning, for example taking an active and

often enthusiastic part in football during games lessons.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The range of attainment of students on entry to the school is broadly average, although none has a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of students make good progress from their various starting points by the end of Key Stage 4. The proportions meeting or exceeding expected rates of progress in English and mathematics are above the national average.
- As a result, the majority achieve at least five grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, in their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. Results for the last three years in English, mathematics and science show a strong improvement on previous years.
- The level of challenge provided for the more able students has also improved, resulting in an increase in A and B grades achieved in these three core subjects. However, the most-able students do not achieve consistently well across the full range of subjects in all year groups.

The most-able students achieved a small number of A* grades in English literature, mathematics, science, Islamic studies, and religious studies in the last two years. This represents excellent achievement and is an improvement on previous years' results.

- Careers guidance is good and students are provided with good individual guidance as they prepare to move on from Year 11. All those students who left the school at the end of Year 11 in 2014 moved on to A-Level courses, vocational diplomas in school sixth forms or colleges of further education, or to an Alima course.
- Students mostly make good progress through Key Stage 3 but progress between subjects varies dependent on the quality of teaching. The progress of the majority of students accelerates at Key Stage 4. Currently, however, progress in some classes is not good owing to the changes of staffing, which has led to a decline in the quality of teaching.
- Students develop their skills well in reading and writing; the great majority demonstrate sufficient fluency and accuracy in literacy to cope well with the demands of GCSE courses at Key Stage 4. External examination results indicate that students develop proficiency in mathematics, although there are limited opportunities to apply their numeracy skills practically in other subjects.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	103595
Inspection number	455486
DfE registration number	330/6088

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Muslim day school for girls
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Proprietor	Asif Jawaid
Chair	Asif Jawaid
Headteacher	Samina Jawaid
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800
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