

# Al Huda Girls' School

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

## Inspection dates

23–25 May 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Independent School Standards.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. In 2015 and 2016 most pupils got good grades in English, mathematics and in a range of other GCSE subjects. Pupils are also doing well in their subjects in key stage 3.
- Pupils come from areas with high levels of deprivation. Leaders are overcoming barriers to learning with modest resources. Leaders train teachers well.
- Leaders have a moral commitment to the academic, personal and spiritual development of pupils of all ages and abilities. Pupils are aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in British democratic society.
- Leaders use assessment information well. They make sure that they have detailed knowledge of pupils' ability, and they use this well for middle- and lower-ability pupils.
- Teachers plan learning that is imaginative and builds securely on pupils' prior attainment.
- Leaders monitor the school well. Leaders help teachers plan lessons thoroughly and help pupils make good use of teachers' feedback.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, at breaktimes and when moving around the school. Pupils are courteous, well mannered and welcoming.
- Leaders make sure that pupils get high-quality independent careers advice and guidance. As a result, pupils are inspired to do well. They want to learn because they believe it will help their later careers.
- The school works well with other agencies and schools. For example, leaders use Birmingham children's services attendance team and safeguarding colleagues and, where necessary, the police to improve their pupils' attendance and welfare. Despite this, weak attendance of some pupils holds back their progress

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that leaders and teachers provide greater challenge for the most able pupils to achieve at a higher level in science and in mathematics by
  - teachers raising their expectations of what the most able pupils in science and mathematics can achieve
  - improving planning and resources for the most able pupils in science and mathematics, so that appropriate teaching and learning strategies are used to help them make progress.
- Ensure that attendance continues to improve by
  - working with parents to give them the help and information they need to support high levels of attendance
  - continuing to work with local authority agencies to support those pupils whose progress is still held back by their weak attendance.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- There is a new acting headteacher in post. The acting headteacher took up her position in February 2017 following the absence of the substantive headteacher. The acting headteacher has a secure and thorough grasp of standards at the school and how to make further improvements. Until February 2017, she was the deputy headteacher. The school has also made an internal promotion of a senior leader to the post of acting deputy headteacher.
- Leaders have developed and sustained an ambitious culture in the school. Leaders monitor outcomes well and have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Outcomes for pupils are good in key stage 3 and key stage 4.
- Leaders engage and motivate their staff. Staff plan their lessons meticulously, so that progress of pupils from their starting points is good. This is especially marked for lower-ability and middle-ability pupils. The school knows through its self-evaluation that there is still more to do to improve outcomes for the most able pupils in science and mathematics.
- Leaders use professional development well. Leaders train staff in such areas as literacy, attendance, safeguarding and GCSE moderation and standardisation. Leaders keep a careful check on the quality of teachers' assessments so that accurate information can be provided to pupils and parents.
- The proprietor and leaders use performance management to raise standards, linking teachers' pay to pupils' outcomes. Leaders support teachers with training and allow them to go on courses in, for example, examination moderation and attendance.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Leaders teach pupils in assembly, tutor times and lessons across the curriculum in how to respect democracy, the law and about personal responsibility.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils have visited different churches and faith centres. The school promotes democracy by expecting pupils to participate in voting for the head girl and in assembly by learning about how democracy works in modern Britain. Leaders take pupils to the theatre. For instance, the recent trip to see 'The Woman in Black' was particularly appreciated by pupils.
- The curriculum is balanced and sufficiently broad. Over the last year, leaders have built more creative experiences into the curriculum. All pupils take GCSE art. Pupils take part in drama activities in lessons. In one lesson, for example, pupils learned about polymer bonds through role play, and this helped the class deepen their understanding of this concept. The school is working with King Edward's Grammar school to extend music learning and help pupils explore a range of different musical instruments.
- Most pupils come from areas of high social deprivation. The school works hard to keep fees affordable. Parents send their pupils to Al Huda primarily because the school offers single-sex Islamic education and low teacher-pupil ratios.
- A member of Birmingham's children's services team explained on the inspection how well the school works with social workers and the police when this is necessary. The school

publishes a safeguarding policy on its website, and it is fully compliant with statutory requirements.

- Parents are kept well informed by the school's reporting system of frequent letters home and specially arranged meetings. Recently, leaders held evenings for parents on GCSE revision and on how to improve attendance. Parents value these communications and attendance is showing recent and marked improvements.

## **Governance**

- The sole proprietor leads and manages the school effectively.
- Safeguarding is secure. Outcomes are good. The proprietor oversees the leadership team rigorously, making sure that statutory safeguarding requirements are met, the curriculum is broad and balanced, and pupils go on to further education with appropriate qualifications.
- The proprietor makes sure that pupils make progress from starting points. He requires leaders to track pupils' progress well. The proprietor ensures that leaders assess pupils well throughout both key stages, so they are well prepared for their GCSEs.
- The proprietor has ensured that leaders made the improvements required at the last full inspection in February 2015. He has made sure that the improvements noted at the subsequent progress monitoring inspection in November 2015 have been secured.
- The proprietor has ensured that there is a development plan in place for the next stage of the school's development. Leaders are held to account through this plan and the self-evaluation the school has in place.
- The proprietor knows how important it is to use the school's limited resources efficiently. There are plans to further develop and refurbish the school site. This is particularly important in the science room. Leaders know that for the most able pupils to achieve the highest grades, they need facilities that engage their curiosity and offer appropriate levels of challenge.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders work closely with local authority and police agencies to promote pupils' welfare. The school provides effective teaching in keeping safe online. Pupils say they know how to use electronic communication thoughtfully and safely.
- The school keeps a highly effective single central record. This means pupils are kept safe because the school ensures that all employees are checked thoroughly and promptly.
- Leaders keep themselves up to date with the latest requirements of the 'Prevent' duty, children missing in education legislation, child sexual exploitation awareness and other statutorily required training.
- Pupils feel safe at the school. There are no recorded examples of bullying. When pupils want to talk about issues that concern them, they know who to turn to. The school takes prompt and effective action when there are safeguarding issues requiring further investigation.

- Leader's management of staff recruitment is exemplary. Staff keep detailed paperwork and follow rigorous and robust interview and induction practices.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Pupils use time productively in lessons. They pay rapt attention to their teachers, who they clearly hold in high regard. Pupils work well to deadlines and enjoy the challenge of preparing for examinations. Pupils consolidate their learning well. There were many examples in English, for example, of pupils revisiting analysis skills to make sure they developed their reading knowledge.
- Pupils respond well to feedback in their books and when teachers give guidance in lessons. In English and mathematics, the lead inspector saw many examples of pupils improving their understanding as a result of feedback. Teachers use assessment well in their planning. The school makes sure that every teacher knows the starting points of each pupil. This is effective in helping lower-ability and middle-ability pupils make progress. However, it is not used as well to help the most able pupils in mathematics and science. The school needs to do more to ensure that the most able pupils in science, for example, have access to resources that will stimulate their imagination and interest in scientific methods.
- Learning in English workbooks is often thorough, detailed and wide-ranging. There are examples of high-quality analysis of text. Pupils enjoy creative writing, and some have done well in competitions that they have entered in story writing. The school publishes this work, and the pupils speak of it with pride.
- In Qur'anic learning pupils are confident and enjoy trying out pronunciation of new vocabulary. They learn about the content of the Qur'an diligently and discuss the moral lessons they can apply to their lives.
- In religious studies, pupils understand important features of a wide range of faith traditions. Pupils study the Christian, Sikh, Judaic and Hindu faiths, for example, alongside their core studies of the Islamic faith. Pupils spoke of their knowledge of people who have atheistic and agnostic views. Pupils have a tolerant and open-minded approach to religious study. Pupils challenge stereotypes of different social and religious groups. Pupils regard religious and social diversity as a cause for celebration.
- The school values homework. In science, for example, pupils were set homework to help them learn core concepts in chemistry, physics and biology and they used this in their subsequent classroom work.
- Pupils' reading and writing is of high quality. The school ensures that pupils write in extended forms, for example, and there are many examples in pupils' books of high-quality comparison work in English, analysis writing in geography and explanation writing in religious studies. The school has plans to expand opportunities for independent reading for pleasure. Library resources are currently very limited.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning in all year groups and in all subjects. They enjoy answering questions, and they help each other out and are proud to show their workbooks. Pupils learn from their mistakes and work with their teachers to overcome difficulties.

- The school provides accurate information to parents. Pupils' reports have well considered and achievable targets. Teachers' expectations are not yet high enough to ensure that the most able pupils in science and mathematics are given suitably challenging targets and the means to meet them through appropriate resourcing.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are self-confident. They speak highly of opportunities to take on roles of prefect, school council and head girl. The school inspires its pupils by inviting back ex-pupils who have gone on to careers in the medical and legal professions. These alumni share with pupils their experiences and how to access similar routes themselves.
- The school ensures that pupils' self-awareness is strong. Pupils write in English about their experiences growing up in the modern world. They write about how they seek opportunities to contribute to the lives of others and of how they encounter and overcome prejudice.
- Pupils understand how to be successful learners. The lead inspector saw workbooks where pupils ask teachers how to get better marks in tests and then follow up showing how they act on advice.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is good. Pupils speak of how safe they feel. They learn about how to stay healthy. They feel safe enough to make disclosure, and when this happens, the school acts swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from bullying. The school has no record of any bullying and pupils say it does not exist.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and social times. Pupils follow their teachers' instructions immediately and without demur.
- Pupils are self-disciplined. During the inspection, the lead inspector did not see any occasion when teachers had to reprimand pupils. Indeed, teachers have good reason to give frequent rewards for paying close attention, working hard and being polite.
- The school environment is well cared for by pupils. Displays and workbooks are matters of pride for pupils.
- Attendance is showing marked improvement. The school is voluntarily working with Birmingham Council's school attendance protocols and is having some success.
- The school does not offer enough opportunities to the most able pupils to debate and discuss in science and mathematics and so make the progress leaders expect.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- In 2016 and 2015, most pupils made good progress in their GCSE examinations from their starting points in a range of subjects including English, mathematics and science.
- All pupils at the school come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. The school helps its pupils make good progress despite these barriers to their learning.
- Pupils make good progress because leaders ensure that there is close tracking of their learning, effective support in lessons and that lessons are well prepared. Leaders and teachers monitor the learning of pupils carefully and help pupils to improve their work.
- From starting points, progress in English and for most pupils in mathematics is close to national figures, and this is in line with what leaders expect.
- Most-able pupils do not make the progress leaders expect in science and mathematics in key stage 4. Too few most-able pupils get the highest grades in GCSE science and mathematics.
- Outcomes for pupils currently at the school are good in key stage 4. This is most marked in English. Pupils of all abilities do well in English. This is because teachers plan learning that is challenging and well resourced with suitable reading in non-fiction and fiction.
- In key stage 3, pupils do better than in key stage 4. This is because assessments are better planned. Pupils have a clear idea of how to improve. Pupils make better progress in all subjects in key stage 3 than in key stage 4.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. All pupils in 2015 and 2016 went on to further education. Most pupils go on to follow A level courses in sixth forms at nearby secondary schools. The school tracks its pupils to higher education, and many pupils who have attended Al Huda School have gone on to study degree level courses in medicine and in the law.
- Reading is challenging. The lead inspector saw examples of pupils reading Dickens and Shakespeare with enjoyment and in depth. Pupils read scientific material with close attention and understand scientific processes and concepts as a result.
- There are no pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities at the school nor were there any in 2015 or 2016. The school is prepared for working with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have an open and inclusive approach to learning in their community.

## School details

Unique reference number	103595
DfE registration number	330/6088
Inspection number	10020735

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Asif Jawaid
Headteacher	Samina Jawaid
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800
Telephone number	0121 328 8999
Website	<a href="http://www.al-hudagirlsschool.com">www.al-hudagirlsschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:sr_alhuda@hotmail.co.uk">sr_alhuda@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2015

## Information about this school

- The school is an independent day school.
- The religious ethos declared by the school during the process of registering as an independent school is Muslim.
- There is a new acting headteacher in post and a new acting deputy headteacher in post. This is due to the absence of the substantive headteacher since February 2017.
- The school is not part of a multi-academy trust.
- The school does not use any specially resourced provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.



- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school does not have any off-site units.
- There were no qualifying complaints relating to this school since the last inspection.
- In February 2015, the school had a standard inspection and was found to require improvement.
- In November 2015, the school had an unannounced progress monitoring visit, and all standards were found to be met.

## Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed learning in 10 lessons in key stage 3 and key stage 4. These were joint observations with the acting headteacher.
- The lead inspector looked at pupils' workbooks in all the lessons visited.
- He met with the sole proprietor and with pupils to discuss with them their experience of being at the school.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised a range of records of recruitment, welfare plans and actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector had a telephone call with a social worker from Birmingham's children's services who is working with the school on safeguarding.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation the school produced as part of its self-evaluation and planning. He had a telephone call with the Birmingham local authority lead officer for attendance.
- Responses from the staff questionnaire were considered. There were no responses to Parent View and no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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