

Independent school progress report

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Unique reference number	103595
Inspection number	345613
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Reporting inspector	Fatiha Maitland

This inspection visit to the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 at the request of the registering authority for independent schools.

Age group: 11-16

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Purpose and scope of the visit

This inspection visit was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002. The visit 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 in Birmingham. It admits girls from 11 to 16 years of age and there are currently 117 students on roll. The vast majority are from Pakistani, Somali and Arabic backgrounds and 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.

The school opened in 1992 and is located in a Victorian building in the Washwood Heath area of Birmingham. Provision is a mix of Islamic and secular teaching. The school was last inspected in January 2006. The school aims to, 'promote equality of opportunity for young British Muslim girls, enabling them to understand and become integrated members of British society.

Context of the visit

The school was last inspected in May 2008. The inspection judged the school to be providing an inadequate quality of education. The school produced an action plan in July 2009. The proposed action plan was deemed unsatisfactory. A progress monitoring visit was recommended, as many of the aspects of the action plan needed to be seen in action. The purpose of this visit was to check whether the school has taken appropriate steps to address the weaknesses identified in the inspection report and to assess the amount of progress made in meeting regulations.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

At its previous inspection in May 2009, the secular curriculum was judged inadequate. The school has remedied some of the weaknesses. The school now has prepared an overall programme for the development of personal, social and health education and some of its elements are also supported through science and Islamic studies. The school has also established a partnership with Connexions, which has held group work discussions with students from Year 7-11 on a fortnightly basis in order to provide appropriate guidance for the students on their future educational and employment opportunities. The girls say they appreciate the support provided. There are also plans to provide the girls with the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, including work experience in a variety of settings.

There are still outstanding weaknesses that the school has failed to address. Although the school has a curriculum policy with clear aims and purposes, the schemes of work are not planned well in order to meet the differing learning needs of the students. There are some opportunities to support the development of speaking and listening, but these are not sufficient to enable the girls to express their ideas and feelings and challenge thinking. As a result, students do not make as much progress as they should in relation to their starting points. The secular curriculum in both Key Stages 3 and 4 is based on the National Curriculum programmes of study and all of the required areas of learning are covered. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is still at a very early stage of development, largely due to the lack of internet facilities and ongoing technical difficulties with equipment. Therefore, students are not prepared for their future effectively and they do not acquire a satisfactory level of basic skills, particularly in ICT.

The last inspection found significant weaknesses in teaching and assessment and this is still the case. Although teachers prepare some resources to engage and stimulate the students, they do not use assessment procedures effectively. As a result, activities and tasks do not match students' needs and fail to provide sufficient challenge to stretch the more able. Planning is minimal and timing is not managed wisely. The girls do not have learning targets and do not know the levels they have achieved in their learning. Although marking is regular, it does not tell the girls what they could do to improve the quality of their work. Opportunities to challenge thinking and to promote independent learning skills are missed and students also report this.

Policies relating to child protection were found inadequate in the 2009 inspection. The school has made good progress in remedying these weaknesses. The child protection policy now has clear aims, procedures and responsibilities. It also identifies the route for referral of safeguarding concerns and includes the contact number for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Both the designated child protection officer and the deputy officer have received up-to-date advanced training. Staff have recently attended a training event on safeguarding. Those spoken to know what to do if a concern does arise.

The inspection of May 2009 found the school did not meet the requirement for appropriate checks on all members of staff prior to their appointment. The school has remedied most of these weaknesses. The school now undertakes all the appropriate checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Applicants are fully checked for their suitability to work with children before their appointment is confirmed. The checks are also carried out on the proprietor to confirm his identity and right to work in the United Kingdom; an enhanced CRB check has been applied for, but the certificate is not yet obtained. The necessary checks are recorded on a handwritten single staff register. There are clear procedures for the recruitment and appointment of staff and there is evidence that the school is aware of the safeguarding requirements.

The earlier inspection found weaknesses in the school's premises. The school has rectified some of these weaknesses. The school now ensures that classrooms are appropriate in size for the number of students on roll. The school has improved toilet facilities to meet the needs of its students.

There are still outstanding weaknesses. Although the school has decorated some classrooms, other parts of the school are not adequately decorated. Several parts of the school are not clean and hygienic. Some of the flooring including the carpeted areas around the school, particularly on the stairs, is in need of updating.

The school has failed to make adequate progress overall in implementing its action plan. It still has significant weaknesses and fails to make adequate educational provision for pupils.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection visit, the school must take urgent action to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003¹ as amended ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- improve the appropriate plans and ensure that they are implemented effectively (paragraph 1(2)).
- provide opportunities for students to develop their speaking/ listening/ literacy/ numeracy (paragraph 1(2)(c)).
- provide opportunities for all students to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i)).
- 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 1(3)(a)).
- ensure that teaching encourages students to apply intellectual, physical or creative efforts and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 1(3)(b)).
- ensure that lessons are well planned, effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used and class time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c)).
- ensure that teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d)).

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

- ensure that teachers demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught (paragraph 1(3)(e)).
- ensure that there is a framework in place to assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and that information from such assessments is utilised to plan teaching so that students can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).
- ensure that the school has in place a framework by which student performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents and/or, by national norms (paragraph 1(4)).
- ensure CRB checks made on the proprietor are complete (paragraph (4 B(2) & (3)).
- improve classrooms and other parts of the school so that they are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state (paragraph 5(n)).
- provide a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration (paragraph 5(q)).
- provide appropriate flooring that is in good condition (paragraph 5(s)).

School details

Name of school	Al Huda Girls School
DCSF number	330/6088
Unique reference number	103595
Type of school	Muslim Girls Day School
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1992
Age range of students	11-16
Gender of students	Girls
Number on roll (full-time students)	117
Annual fees (day students)	£1,500
Address of school	74-76 Washwood Heath Road Saltley Birmingham West Midlands B8 1RD
Telephone number	0121 328 8999
Fax number	0121 327 2974
Email address	Alhuda.girls.school@gmail.com
Headteacher	Mrs Y Jawaid
Proprietor	Mr A Jawaid
Reporting inspector	Fatiha Maitland
Dates of inspection	20 November 2009