

Islamiyah School

Willow Street, Little Harwood, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 5NQ

Inspection dates

17–19 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The school is exceptionally successful in achieving its aim of 'Offering a broad and balanced curriculum alongside a positive understanding of Islam, to equip every pupil with skills to be a successful learner, confident individual and responsible British citizen.'
- Leaders are highly ambitious for the school and its pupils. They have ensured that the quality of education that the school provides has improved strongly since the last inspection, so it is now outstanding in all areas.
- Pupils' attainment is outstanding. From their different starting points pupils make excellent progress in a wide range of subjects. By the time that they leave the school, the proportions of pupils achieving strong and standard passes in English and mathematics GCSEs are significantly above the national average.
- Teaching across all year groups and all subjects is of a consistently high standard. Teachers have outstanding subject knowledge. They make excellent use of assessment information to make sure that work is very well matched to pupils' needs.
- Excellent careers advice and very well-developed links with colleges and universities fuel pupils' ambitions. All recent pupils have gone on to further studies, and current pupils have lofty career aspirations and a clear understanding of how to achieve their goals.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are extremely well mannered, thoughtful and articulate. They are happy in school and feel safe and cared for very well.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with a broad and well-balanced education, which is very successfully developing their skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects.
- Provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their understanding of British values, is outstanding.
- Although the curriculum is rich and broad, there is still scope for it to be developed further by increasing the number of award-bearing subjects on offer in key stage 4. In key stage 3, pupils have limited opportunities to take part in practical science activities.

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?

- Further improve the impact of science teaching in key stage 3 by ensuring that pupils are given more opportunities to carry out practical experiments.
- Continue to broaden the range of award-bearing subjects offered to pupils in key stage 4.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have very successfully created a highly ambitious culture across the school. The extremely high expectations that they have for pupils' academic success and personal development are shared by governors, staff and the pupils themselves.
- The actions taken by leaders since the school's last inspection have secured strong improvements in the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils, both of which are now outstanding. However, there is no sign of leaders resting on their laurels, as they continue to make further improvements to the school, such as developing a new art block so that pupils can study art up to GCSE level.
- Leaders have ensured that the attainment of all groups of pupils has improved year on year. They make excellent use of the school's detailed assessment information to closely monitor how well disadvantaged pupils are doing, and to check too on the achievement of the very small number of pupils in the school who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. The school's self-evaluation is detailed and accurate and is used very effectively in developing plans for further school improvement. The proprietor and leaders also maintain detailed records to check the school continues to comply with the independent school standards.
- Staff are highly supportive of the school's leadership team. They appreciate the opportunities that they have to access training across a range of areas, including safeguarding, behaviour management and assessment. Leaders themselves have benefited from accredited external training which has helped to develop their leadership skills and knowledge.
- The headteacher makes excellent use of the skills and knowledge of the staff within the school. Leadership roles are distributed effectively to further develop leaders' skills and knowledge, and to maximise leadership capacity as the school moves forward.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of the highest quality. Pupils become impressively reflective and thoughtful, appreciating the differences that exist in modern society and explaining clearly the importance of tolerance and acceptance of differences in people's views and beliefs. School policies, work on display around school and pupils' views all confirm that fundamental British values are a crucial aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders ensure that diversity and equality of opportunity are extremely well promoted. Prejudiced behaviour is not tolerated and work in subjects such as religious studies and history shows that pupils develop real empathy for people of different religions who have suffered persecution, such as in the Holocaust in the Second World War.
- The school provides pupils with a broad and well-balanced curriculum which enables them to develop their skills and knowledge across a wide range of disciplines. The curriculum very effectively combines the school's Islamic background with the need to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Subjects such as Arabic, Urdu and Islamic studies are studied alongside computing, English language and

literature and separate sciences.

- The curriculum is very well enhanced with a broad range of enrichment activities in which pupils enthusiastically take part. Many pupils have had success in local and national poetry and mathematics competitions. Pupils enthusiastically told inspectors about trips they had made to Castleshaw Roman fort and Quarry Bank Mill as part of their work in history. Recently, a number of pupils had successfully taken part in an enterprise competition organised by the University of Central Lancashire, winning four of the available awards.
- Although the curriculum is already well balanced and interesting, leaders have put plans in place to develop it further and widen pupils' options by introducing art at GCSE level. Pupils welcome this development and would like to see the range of award-bearing subjects extended further, for example by teaching geography and business studies in key stage 4.

Governance

- Governors share leaders' ambitions for the school. They have very successfully ensured that the school has continued to improve and standards to rise by robustly holding school leaders to account for the quality of education the school provides. Records of governing body meetings confirm that governors ask searching questions of leaders and have a very good understanding of how well the school is performing.
- Governors ensure that the school provides excellent value for money by closely monitoring the school's budget and ensuring that funds are used to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum. For example, governors have overseen the development of a new art block which will allow art to be taught to GCSE level.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead has helped to develop a culture in school which has pupils' safety and welfare at its heart. The school's detailed safeguarding policy, regularly updated to reflect current statutory requirements, is published on its website.
- Leaders have ensured that staff and governors receive regular training to keep their knowledge of best practice in safeguarding up to date. Leaders also ensure that thorough checks are made on all staff, governors and regular visitors to make sure that they are suitable people to work with children. Detailed records of these checks are maintained.
- The school has effective links with parents and carers and external agencies to ensure that support and guidance are provided for potentially vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Highly effective teaching over time develops in pupils a palpable enthusiasm for learning. Through their teachers' encouragement, pupils become thoughtful and interested learners who are eager to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide variety of subjects. Relationships between teachers and pupils are

exemplary.

- Teachers display very strong subject knowledge, which allows them to plan logically, and to identify any misconceptions in pupils' learning and act swiftly to address them. Teachers use well-chosen resources to match work accurately to pupils' needs.
- Teaching in subjects such as history, religious studies and citizenship very impressively progresses pupils' skills in developing arguments based on evidence that they have found. Teachers ensure that pupils develop both subject-specific skills, such as comparing people from different time periods or religions, and their English skills. This supports pupils' extremely strong progress and high attainment in many different subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is very well planned and effective. Pupils who need extra support are helped to catch up, while there is a significant level of challenge in the work given to the most able pupils. This is typical of the very high expectations teachers display across the curriculum.
- The school has developed a comprehensive assessment system based on a combination of focused testing and teachers' assessment. This is used to measure pupils' progress against highly ambitious targets derived from their key stage 2 assessment results and tests taken on entry to the school. Leaders skilfully identify any pupils not making the outstanding progress that they expect and put additional support in place to help those pupils to catch up again.
- Teachers make extremely effective use of homework tasks to extend pupils' knowledge and develop their skills in presenting information in a clear and coherent way. High-quality work, such as topic work about the Norman Conquest, shows pupils' excellent attitudes to learning extend to work produced at home.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' skills in mathematics, reading, writing and communication are developed very well within other subject areas. This was particularly well illustrated by pupils' presentations about other countries during the school's multicultural day. These showcased pupils' well-developed research skills and their confidence and articulacy in presenting their work.
- While the teaching of science is effective across the school, it is more engaging for pupils in key stage 4 than in key stage 3. This is because the older pupils have more opportunities to play an active role in practical science work, whereas in key stage 3, practical work is often demonstrated by the teacher, with pupils less involved.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are first rate. They fully understand the value of education and the opportunities that a top-quality education can provide for them in terms of further and higher education and their future careers. They work hard but also show a real enthusiasm for learning.
- Excellent, impartial careers advice and positive links with local colleges and universities all help to fuel pupils' ambitions. A display of role models from a wide range of fields,

including politics, sport and business, reinforces the message given to all pupils that there is no 'glass ceiling' for their ambitions. Consequently, pupils speak excitedly about their dreams of becoming, among other things, engineers, accountants and doctors.

- Pupils have an excellent awareness of the importance of physical and mental health. They speak very positively about the work that the school has done to promote emotional well-being. Pupils are also impressively articulate when discussing healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils' simple but powerful statement that 'we were all made equal' accurately sums up their view of difference and tolerance. They will not countenance any form of prejudiced-based bullying and are confident that bullying is not a problem in their school.
- The school ensures that pupils are safe and feel safe at all times. Pupils have a strong understanding of different aspects of personal safety, including when using the internet. Leaders have engaged with an impressive range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive excellent training about how to keep themselves safe in different contexts.
- Pupils' care for others is illustrated by the different fundraising activities in which they take part. They raise money for charitable causes, such as supporting refugee children.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct around school is exemplary. They are unfailingly polite and eager to share what they have been learning with visitors. Older pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility, such as being members of the school council. They also show care and thought for younger pupils in the school.
- Lessons are seldom interrupted by off-task behaviour because pupils' exemplary attitudes to learning, and high levels of respect for their teachers, ensure that lessons typically run extremely smoothly.
- Leaders' records of behavioural incidents show that less-than-excellent behaviour in school is very rare. A clear system of rewards and sanctions is in place and pupils adhere to the school rules with minimal fuss because they like being praised and rewarded for behaving well.
- School leaders give attendance a high profile in school, and work closely with parents to make sure that pupils' attendance remains high. The success of this work is seen in attendance figures which show that levels of absence, and persistent absence, are markedly lower than the national average.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who shared their views with inspectors were highly supportive of the school and its leadership. They had no concerns about bullying and said that their daughters were extremely happy and felt safe in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils come to Islamiyah School from a large number of different primary schools, and with different academic starting points. During their time at the school, the overwhelming majority of pupils make excellent progress in a wide range of subjects to achieve standards of attainment that are well above the national average.
- Attainment in English and mathematics has risen each year and is now much higher than seen in most schools nationally. More than four out of five pupils achieved at least a standard pass in English and mathematics, and six out of 10 achieved a strong pass in both subjects. The very high-quality of work in pupils' books and the school's own highly detailed assessment information show that current pupils are making similarly strong progress to reach high levels of attainment.
- School leaders very carefully monitor the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils across the school. The school's assessment information confirms that disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress and reach standards of attainment higher than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils make excellent use of their English and mathematics skills in other subjects. Outstanding work in history and citizenship illustrates pupils' skill in using evidence to support a point of view or construct an argument. Older pupils use their mathematical skills and knowledge well in their work in physics.
- Excellent work in citizenship and religious studies demonstrates pupils' abilities in reflecting on challenging spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues and their ability to appreciate the views and beliefs of others. Pupils are highly reflective and articulate.
- Pupils read with fluency and excellent comprehension. They use their reading skills to read a wide range of texts for pleasure, from classic literature to modern novels. Their work in preparing for the school's annual multicultural day, in which each class studied a different country in depth, showed that pupils use their reading skills to conduct detailed research.
- A selection of high-quality artwork on display around the school, including textile work and paintings inspired by British and Islamic culture, very effectively showcases pupils' artistic skills. The development of a dedicated art room, which is nearing completion, is intended to allow the school to extend art teaching so that pupils can begin to take art at GCSE level.

School details

Unique reference number	132749
DfE registration number	889/6007
Inspection number	10038840

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	262
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Masjid-E-Sajedeen Islamiyah
Chair	Yunus Ravat
Headteacher	Yusuf Seedat
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,400
Telephone number	01254 661259
Website	www.islamiyahschoolblackburn.com
Email address	info@islamiyahschoolblackburn.com
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2016

Information about this school

- Islamiyah School is a non-selective, independent Muslim day school for girls aged between 11 and 16 years. It is located in the Little Harwood district of Blackburn.
- The school offers both secular and Islamic education.
- Almost all pupils speak English as a first language. Very few pupils have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is well above average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made a number of visits to classes to look at teaching and learning across the school. They also looked at pupils' work in books and the school's own assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors listened to a group of pupils read and held discussions with two further groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of four responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also met with a group of eight parents. Inspectors considered the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with one member of the governing body and scrutinised records of the governing body meetings. They also had discussions with staff in the school, including the school business manager, leaders of science teaching and the deputy headteacher, who was also the designated lead for safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined several school documents. These included a range of policies and records, information about pupils' attainment and progress and the school's review of its own performance. They also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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