

Westwood High

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

The school is a Muslim secondary school for girls, located in Oldham, Lancashire. It opened in February 2012 and this was the first full inspection of the school. The intention is to develop the school to provide for 120 girls aged 11 to 16 years over the next few years. There are 25 girls aged 11 to 13 years currently enrolled at the school in Years 7 and 8. It does not offer provision for students with special educational needs or for students who speak English as an additional language. The school aims to 'deliver a world class education in an environment that nurtures the love for Allah.' The school has approval to extend its facilities to include an adjacent building which will provide an ICT room, science laboratory and additional classroom space. This will enable the school to increase the number on roll to 120.

Evaluation of the school

Westwood High School is a new and improving school that provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets its stated aims well. Leaders have successfully established a satisfactory curriculum which provides appropriately for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Students' positive attitudes to learning have secured satisfactory progress which is improving quickly and securely. Behaviour is good and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. The school has made good arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety, and safeguarding arrangements meet all the requirements.

Quality of education

The curriculum the school provides is satisfactory overall. The provision in Islamic and Qu'ranic studies is good. The secular curriculum follows the National Curriculum and covers all of the required elements. The subjects include English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Science is part of the core offer and this is taught as separate elements. Girls follow a programme including two hours of physical education (PE) which makes effective use of the local facilities. Students also benefit from a well-organised religious education (RE) programme which includes visits to different places of worship. This helps students to understand

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

the similarities and differences between their own faith and that of others. Parents and carers say this is a strong element of the curriculum which is helping their daughters to develop tolerance and understanding of other faiths. The curriculum also includes history and geography. The aesthetic and creative element of the curriculum is taught through art. The school has been effective in making sure that students develop their reading and writing skills. There are good opportunities for students to write extended answers to questions and teachers ensure that students understand and use subject specific words correctly. The development of speaking and listening is not as well developed. Students do get opportunities to work in pairs or groups, but this is not a consistent approach.

The provision for students' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is satisfactory. Students are supported in developing healthy lifestyles through PE and PSHCE lessons, and most adopt healthy eating habits. Students regularly take up opportunities to attend extra-curricular clubs such as the mathematics club. The range of activities available is limited but the school has responded promptly to students' requests and a wider range of clubs is planned in the near future.

The Islamic studies programme covers the core beliefs in Year 7, stories of the prophets, sawm (fasting) and how to make wudu (ablutions). In Year 8 students learn about Hajj (pilgrimage), translation of the ten chapters of the Qur'an, Islamic months and funeral arrangements. The programme is linked well with other areas of the curriculum. For example, in a PSHCE lesson, Year 8 students considered how their work on different ways of resolving conflict linked with Islamic approaches. In Qur'anic studies students learn Tajweed (how to read the Qur'an with correct pronunciation).

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. There is growing proportion of teaching that is good but not yet enough to move students' progress from satisfactory to good. Teachers are committed and work hard to plan lessons which capture students' interests. They have good subject knowledge and, as a result, students have confidence and feel able to ask questions. The pace of learning is usually brisk and students generally work hard and they are keen to do well. Teachers use interactive whiteboard technology to make learning interesting.

Teachers ask probing questions which are designed to meet the needs of individual students. Sometimes this is done very well but often teachers give the answers too easily and talk for too long. This does not help students to think for themselves. Teachers use progress information to plan lessons for students of different abilities. In the very best lessons, students are given tasks that are just right for their ability and this helps them to make good progress. For example, Year 8 girls made good progress when they were learning how to convert percentages, fractions and decimals. This was because the most able were tackling challenging work in pairs while the teacher worked with other students to make sure they fully understood the methods. However, this does not always happen and frequently students all do the same work at the same rate. When this happens more-able students are not challenged enough and less able students struggle to keep up.

Students are keen to learn and complete their work at a good rate. They answer questions readily and clearly enjoy their learning. This is due in no small measure to teachers' detailed knowledge of each individual and the strong relationships between them. Students respond very well when they are given opportunities to work in groups but this does not happen enough. Consequently, students are not developing the skills to solve problems independently which is an important part of preparing for the next stage in their education.

Teachers check the progress students are making using National Curriculum levels. The school uses this information to spot where individual students are not doing as well as they could be and takes swift action to support them. The school does not have a systematic way of analysing progress information across both year groups and this means it is difficult to spot groups of girls who are having the same problems. Teachers generally mark work regularly and offer helpful comments to students about how they can improve their work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. Parents and carers are delighted with how their children have settled into this new school. One parent commented on the warm family like atmosphere in which her daughter is blossoming. This was typical of the comments from parents.

Behaviour is good. Students are respectful to each other and to adults. They respond promptly to requests from teachers. They are cheerful and friendly, especially to visitors to the school. Break and lunch times are relaxing occasions during which girls socialise well and enjoy each other's company. The atmosphere in the school is tolerant and harmonious and students' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. The school council members are developing their role in improving the school.

Students and their parents and carers are clear that behaviour is good. Students say bullying is rare and feel confident they could approach staff for help should they feel uncomfortable. On the few occasions when girls have fallen out, staff have been swift to intervene and help students to resolve their differences amicably.

The school is particularly successful in nurturing an Islamic approach to life. Teachers are skilled at linking learning across the curriculum to Islamic teachings. The school fosters tolerance and understanding of other cultures, faiths and the wider aspects of life in England. This is done across the curriculum but especially through RE and visits to other places of worship.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is good. The school has a systematic approach to ensuring that students are safe. Safeguarding procedures

are thorough and well-organised, with all the required checks made on staff before they are appointed. Staff are appropriately trained in first aid, fire safety and child protection. There are good policies in place and implemented to ensure students' health and safety in school, including first aid arrangements. Fire safety arrangements are good and all the required periodic checks on equipment and services are in place. Visits are well planned with clear and thorough risk assessments completed.

The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are comprehensive and well implemented. The supervision of students is good and the arrangements for recording any incidents of serious misbehaviour are appropriate. Students say they feel safe and enjoy their experience of school.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

A single central record is kept up-to-date and clearly records all the required checks made on the staff and the proprietors.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school premises are of a good quality and provide a good environment for learning. The rooms are light, fresh and airy. The outside recreation area is secure. Classrooms are well maintained and equipped to support effective learning. The school is located on the first floor of a building previously used as offices. There is a specialist ICT suite, office space and a staff workroom. The school complements these facilities with the use of nearby leisure facilities. The new premises are located in the adjacent building and intended to be of a similar specification. The new premises will provide the school with a dedicated science laboratory.

Provision of information

The school provides parents, carers and others with all the required information in an attractive prospectus and dedicated website. Written reports to parents are detailed and provide clear indication of what students need to do to improve.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's policy and procedures fully meet the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Accelerate students' progress by offering consistent opportunities for them to work together to solve problems and cut down on the amount of time teachers talk during lessons.
- Ensure that teachers use progress information to plan tasks which offer the right amount of challenge for the most-able and least-able students.
- Develop a comprehensive and systematic approach to analysing students' progress across all years and subjects.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Secondary school		
Date school opened	February 2012		
Age range of pupils	11–12 years		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 25	Total: 25
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,000		
Address of school	1 st Floor Unit 2 Kelsall Street Oldham OL9 6HR		
Telephone number	0161 622 1947		
Email address	admin@westwoodhigh.org		
Headteacher	Khadija Khan		
Proprietor	Kamal Uddin Khan The Green Dome Academy (Charity)		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 November 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Westwood High School, Oldham, OL9 6HR

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and my colleague when we inspected your school recently. Talking to you, watching you learn and looking at your work was very helpful and showed me what it is like to be a student at your school. I am very pleased to report that Westwood High is a satisfactory school and some important things are good. It has come a long way in a short amount of time and it is improving quickly.

- The staff all care about you very much indeed and work hard to make sure you feel happy and safe. The atmosphere in school is tolerant and harmonious because your behaviour is good.
- The curriculum is satisfactory and your learning in Islamic and Qu'ranic studies is good.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and supported very well by the work you do in Islamic Studies, RE and PSHCE. You have a strong appreciation of other faiths and cultures.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and work hard to make your lessons interesting.

The school does everything it has to do to continue to operate as a school. All the adults want the school to be even better so I have asked them to think about a few things that might help. First, to make sure you get plenty of opportunities to solve problems without relying on the teacher to tell you everything. Second, to make sure teachers give you work that is at exactly the right level for each one of you so that you can make faster progress. Third, to check that progress is good in each year group and in each subject. You can help by making sure that you always work as hard as you can in every lesson and continue to behave well.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt
Her Majesty's Inspector