

# Al Huda Girls' School

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

<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–13 June 2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### This school is adequate because

- Although students' achievement is on an upward trend, their progress is uneven throughout the school.
- Not enough teaching is consistently good or outstanding to accelerate students' progress.
- Although the school has improved its procedures for assessing students' learning and checking their progress, it does not ensure that all teachers' assessments are accurate in Key Stage 3.
- School leaders have made significant improvements since the last inspection and all the standards for independent schools are met. Leaders take effective measures to improve the quality of teaching. However, their checking procedures and self-evaluation lack rigour.
- Curriculum enrichment activities do not sufficiently support students' personal development, particularly in Key Stage 3.

### The school has the following strengths

- The proprietor, school leaders and teachers share the same commitment to making Al Huda a high achieving school.
- The quality of teaching has greatly improved since the last inspection and some is now good or outstanding.
- A high proportion of students achieved A\* to C grades in their GCSEs in English language and mathematics in 2012 and early 2013.
- The school creates a positive Islamic ethos that fosters students' personal development well and promotes good standards of behaviour and good attendance.
- The proprietor ensures that policies and procedures aimed at minimising risks and safeguarding students are up to date and implemented consistently. Consequently, students feel safe and free from harassment.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by seven different teachers. Meetings were held with the proprietor, senior leaders, teaching staff and students. Documentation and policies, particularly relating to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety were scrutinised, as well as curriculum plans, teachers' assessments, students' work, examination results and the performance management of teachers.
- The inspectors also took account of the responses in nine questionnaires completed by staff. It was not possible to obtain information from the online Parent View survey as not enough parents and carers had entered their views.

## Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Yusuf Seedat	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Al Huda Girls' School is a Muslim secondary day school, located in Washwood Heath, Birmingham. The school opened in 1992 and is located in Victorian accommodation. It admits girls who are 11 to 16 years of age.
- There are currently 80 students on roll. The vast majority are from Pakistani, Somali and Bengali backgrounds; nearly all were born in the United Kingdom. No students have a statement of special educational needs or are at the early stages of acquiring English.
- The school had its last full inspection in October 2011 when it was found to provide an inadequate quality of education and did not meet a large number of regulations for independent schools relating to the curriculum, teaching and assessment, welfare, health and safety, safe recruitment and complaints procedures. Following that inspection, a monitoring inspection visit was carried out in March 2012 to check the progress made by the school in implementing its action plan. It was found that, although some improvement had been made, the school did not meet important regulations relating to the quality of education. It was also found that, although the school had engaged consultants to help it with improvement, the high staff turnover meant that support for the staff had only been short term.
- The school aims to 'promote equality of opportunity for young British Muslim girls, enabling them to understand and become integrated members of British society.'

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all is good or outstanding by:
  - ensuring that teachers consistently challenge all students, particularly the more able
  - making arrangements for the internal and external moderation of all teachers' assessments in Key Stage 3 to ensure that they are consistently secure
  - ensuring that the best practice in marking and in the use of targets and examination criteria during lessons is consistently implemented so that students always have a clear picture of what to do to improve to attain the next level.
- Broaden the curriculum to improve students' personal development by:
  - widening the range of extra-curricular activities
  - providing Key Stage 3 students with regular opportunities to contribute to the wider community and have first-hand practical experiences of citizenship.
- Improve the quality of the leadership and management of the school by:
  - checking the quality of teaching more rigorously to help students make good progress in all subjects
  - developing the skills of senior leaders to sharpen their use of information from assessments and the quality of their checking activities
  - using a management plan to support the school in bringing about improvements to enable it to make checks on the effectiveness of actions taken
  - ensuring that the proprietor challenges the school more systematically to secure further improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Adequate

Students' achievement, previously judged to be inadequate owing to low standards in mathematics and science, is now adequate and on an upward trend. As a result of significant improvements in teaching, standards have risen in English, mathematics, science and other subjects. Students typically join the school with starting points that range from well below to above national averages. In 2012 and 2013, teachers worked extremely hard to raise the standards of Key Stage 4 students, having given them well targeted additional support to help them fill the gaps they had in their knowledge. Students were entered early in GCSE examinations in English and mathematics in 2012 and 2013. The proportion of students making or exceeding the expected progress in English compared favourably with national progress measures in English in 2012 and, in mathematics, it was similar to national figures. In 2013, the proportion of students making or exceeding the expected progress in English and mathematics is high. GCSE results for 2012 reflect good progress in science and other subjects. However, students' achievement is not yet good for three main reasons. First, students make uneven progress throughout the school owing to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Second, too few of the more-able students attain A\* to A grades in GCSE examinations because they are not sufficiently challenged to achieve as highly as they otherwise could. Third, the recent improvement in students' attainment has not yet been maintained over a sustained period. The proportion of students achieving A\* to C grades in five subjects including English and mathematics was broadly in line with national averages in 2012. Predictions for 2013 GCSE results indicate good levels of attainment and good progress in all subjects.

Owing to the broadening of the curriculum, students now have frequent opportunities to apply and develop their reading, writing, mathematical and communication skills in most subjects. Students who complete their education in Year 11 are adequately prepared for their future and the vast majority move on to a college of their choice.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. The school creates a positive Islamic ethos in which young girls can flourish and be themselves. It is an inclusive environment where no one is isolated. The staff provide good role models who establish working relationships based on Islamic values, including mutual respect. The school sets very high expectations for behaviour and students respond well to these expectations. Students' behaviour is good and learning occurs in a calm and purposeful environment in which disruptions are very rare. Students gain a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, through personal, social and health education (PSHE) and instances of bullying are rare. Students say that they feel safe and free from harassment. They form positive relationships with staff and peers who have different heritages from their own. They are polite, well-mannered and friendly. Students enjoy school, as reflected in their good attendance and high levels of contribution in class. However, not all are punctual to school.

Good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development supports students' personal development well and meets one of the school's aims. Close links between religious education and citizenship are successful in developing students' understanding of their faith and of how Islamic spiritual and moral principles are enacted when living the lives of responsible and active citizens in multicultural Britain. Students are taught to respect the beliefs of others and learn about world religions through religious education (RE) and educational visits in a way that promotes social harmony. They have recently visited a church and learnt first-hand about Judaism from the member of a local synagogue. Year 11 students have rich experiences that develop the skills and knowledge required to become proactive citizens. For example, they have analysed the views of local associations working to reduce abortion and forced marriages, and have raised their

peers' awareness of these matters. They have visited the Houses of Parliament and contacted local councillors and Members of Parliament in the course of their citizenship projects. However, Key Stage 3 students have more limited opportunities for practical citizenship. Students learn to practise democracy by electing the student council. However, the scope of the student council is too restricted to deepen Key Stage 3 students' understanding of their future roles as citizens. The proprietor has taken very effective steps to ensure that where controversial political views are discussed, a balanced debate is achieved and no partisan view is promoted.

### Quality of teaching

### Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate and enables students to make adequate progress overall. All the failings related to teaching and assessment that were reported in the last inspection have been remedied. Specialist and well-experienced teachers have been recruited. Every classroom now has technological equipment to support teaching and students' learning, and most teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively. An additional computer room has been created and students have access to computers outside lessons to do their work and carry out research. Teachers benefit from good quality training to develop their teaching skills and they say that they feel well supported in their professional development. The proportion of good teaching has increased since the last inspection but it is currently insufficiently high to enable students to make consistently good progress. The main weakness in teaching is that all students are not consistently challenged, particularly the more able, at a sufficiently high level to enable them to make good progress in relation to their varying starting points. Sometimes, the tasks planned do not meet the needs of some students sufficiently closely. Most lesson plans include specific criteria against which students can measure their progress but, on occasion, these are not shared with the students. At times, the teacher does not check on students' written responses sufficiently rigorously to identify the most effective way to support or extend individual students' learning during lessons. On other occasions, the teacher gives constructive verbal feedback to students so that they can improve, but not consistently and not in sufficient detail. Consequently, students can only make adequate progress.

Nevertheless, there is some good and outstanding teaching to build upon. In lessons that are good or better, students are challenged well by probing questions that systematically deepen their understanding of the topic and resources that are thoughtfully adapted to meet their different needs accurately. The teacher is very attentive to students' verbal and written responses, and makes timely interventions to correct misconceptions or errors at once and promptly re-focus students' learning. Where detailed academic guidance and constructive verbal and written feedback give students a clear picture of what they need to do to raise their standards up to the next level, all students are consistently stretched and make outstanding progress.

Teachers regularly assess students' work using National Curriculum levels that enable comparison with national norms. However, whereas teachers' assessments are moderated externally in Key Stage 4, in Key Stage 3 there is no internal or external moderation of teachers' assessments in all subjects to ensure that they are secure. Some teachers give students high quality marking comments and set targets very effectively to accelerate students' progress. However, this good practice is not established throughout the school. There are useful systems to track students' progress in English, mathematics and science in comparison with their starting points. However, they are not sufficiently refined to always give an accurate picture of progress over time.

### Quality of curriculum

### Adequate

The curriculum is adequate in serving the needs of students and preparing them for their future, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school has rectified all the previous deficiencies and broadened the curriculum so that it now covers all the required areas of learning. The curriculum includes ICT, art and food technology from Year 7 to Year 11. The

school has plans in hand to introduce a history GCSE course in September 2013. GCSE courses in ICT and psychology were introduced in September 2012. Early entry to GCSE examinations is considered carefully and was justified by results in English language and mathematics in 2012 and 2013. A new Islamic studies course examined at IGCSE level was introduced in summer 2013 to deepen students' knowledge of Islam once they have completed their GCSE RE examination. Schemes of work ensure that students can progress in their learning and they are sufficiently detailed to support the teaching. The most effective schemes indicate how students could be supported and challenged. Links between subjects are planned consistently to support the development of students' literacy, mathematical and communication skills, and to make their learning more coherent. For example, the schemes of work for RE and citizenship indicate very close links between these two subjects and reflect a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, while Key Stage 4 students have opportunities to contribute to the wider community and experience what it means to be responsible and proactive citizens, opportunities for Key Stage 3 students are more limited. Students are helped to make informed choices about their future through effective careers advice that includes work experience. The enrichment programme is planned to enhance all areas of the curriculum. However, while students' physical skills are extended by a sports club, the range of lunch time and after-school clubs is too narrow to extend their creative, mathematical and communication skills.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

**Good**

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. The proprietor ensures that safeguarding arrangements are robust. All the required checks are carried on staff to ascertain their suitability to work with children. These checks are carefully recorded in a single central register. All staff are trained at the appropriate levels in child protection and there are three designated persons for child protection trained at a more advanced level. There is a sufficient number of staff trained in first aid. The essential policies for behaviour, anti-bullying, child protection, health and safety and first aid are up to date and implemented consistently. Suitable risk assessments are carried out and regularly reviewed for the premises, fire safety and on- and off-site activities. All the required fire safety checks are made at the appropriate intervals and carefully recorded. Admission and attendance registers are maintained properly and attendance is monitored robustly. Students are supervised well throughout the day, and they feel safe and well cared for. Students learn how to keep safe in the community and when using the internet, through the curriculum, assemblies and visits from public service officers. They demonstrate a strong commitment to healthy lifestyles, which are promoted well through the curriculum and a sports club.

### **Leadership and management**

**Adequate**

Leadership and management are adequate. The proprietor communicates an ambitious vision to all staff and strongly contributes to leading improvements. The senior leaders and teachers have worked very effectively together to improve the school since the last inspection when it was judged to provide an inadequate quality of education and welfare. As a result, all the regulations for independent schools are now met. With help from consultants, the school has raised the quality of teaching and achievement from inadequate to adequate and set up systems to check the quality of education and evaluate its own performance. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. There are effective strategies to retain staff, including good quality continuous professional development and effective management of their performance. There are systematic procedures to check the quality of teaching, including early observations of new staff's lessons and regular analysis of students' work, which is essential in view of the high staff turnover. ICT resources are deployed very effectively to support students' learning. There are effective systems to assess students' learning and track their progress. The school has strengthened its partnerships with parents and carers to better support students' achievement. Parents and carers receive all the required information. The complaints procedures meet requirements. The teaching accommodation is adequate to support effective learning.

However, there is still much to do to secure good teaching and achievement and this is why leadership and management are not yet good. Senior leaders do not check the quality of teaching with sufficient rigour to help students make good progress in all subjects. They have not made arrangements to moderate all teachers' assessments in Key Stage 3 to ensure their accuracy. They and teachers do not use the information from assessments sufficiently sharply to accelerate students' progress. The school's work to improve its performance is not supported by a written management plan that enables it to make checks on the effectiveness of actions taken. The proprietor does not challenge the senior leaders systematically enough to secure rapid improvements, but has plans in hand to set up a board of governors to challenge and appraise the headteacher.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103595
<b>Inspection number</b>	420215
<b>DfE registration number</b>	330/6088

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent School
<b>School status</b>	Muslim girls' secondary day school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Birmingham Education Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Asif Jawaid
<b>Headteacher</b>	Samina Jawaid
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3–4 October 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£1,500
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