

Inspection of Al Islah Girls' High School

108 Audley Range, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1TF

Inspection dates:

4 to 6 March 2025

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

The atmosphere at Al Islah Girls' High School is friendly and welcoming. The Islamic ethos of the school underpins the teaching of pupils and helps to create the respectful atmosphere that permeates the school. When they join the school, pupils settle in quickly. They are safe and happy here.

High aspirations and ambition spreads through every aspect of this school. This is reflected in pupils' commendable attitudes to learning and the high-quality work they produce. Pupils rise to the school's high expectations. They typically achieve well and are ready for their next steps.

Pupils' behaviour is praiseworthy. They are excellent ambassadors for the school. Pupils care deeply about the school and local community. They regularly organise fundraising events. For example, pupils put together pamper packs for a local women's refuge and make afternoon tea packs for a charity that supports the elderly.

The school places a high priority on pupils' personal development. It wants pupils to learn about life and experiences in the wider world. Visiting speakers, such as an engineer, a soldier, and people from the business world, help broaden pupils' horizons and provide pupils with useful insight into the world of work.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's vision to provide academic excellence is reflected in the ambitious curriculum. It provides a broad range of subjects and fulfils the requirements of the independent school standards (the standards). Pupils are well supported to gain qualifications which help them in the next stage of their education or employment.

The school's curriculum identifies the important knowledge that pupils will learn over time. It organises key subject knowledge and skills in a logical order. This enables pupils to build their knowledge of the different subjects cumulatively year-on-year. Teachers have strong subject knowledge across all subject areas. Mostly, teachers deliver new knowledge clearly.

In most subjects, teachers make effective checks on what pupils know and understand. However, at times, teachers do not consistently use this information well enough to address gaps in pupils' learning. Teaching in some lessons moves on before pupils have secure understanding. This means that pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for future learning.

The school fosters a love of reading among pupils. Many pupils make use of the school's vibrant library and engage with the newly introduced 'buddy readers' school initiative. However, systems to identify pupils who are weaker readers are underdeveloped. This means that those pupils who cannot read with fluency and

confidence, at times, can go unnoticed. As a result, these pupils do not receive sufficient help to catch up quickly so that they can access the full curriculum.

Currently, no pupils have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school works effectively with parents and carers to support any additional needs as they arise, ensuring that pupils receive timely and appropriate help.

Pupils are fully focused during lessons. They are attentive and eager to learn. They manage their own behaviour well and are highly self-motivated to work independently. They adhere to the school's behaviour policy which staff implement consistently and fairly. The impact of pupils' strong relationships with staff is evident in all aspects of school life. At social times, pupils are mature and courteous. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their high rates of attendance.

The school's work to help pupils become confident young women is a strength. A comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum fully reflects the school's ethos and values. It includes effective messages about the importance of equality, healthy relationships and the dangers of drugs. Pupils learn about a wide range of different religions, cultures and perspectives through lessons and thoughtful visits. From the start, the school strives to instil in pupils the need to respect all members of society and to act with integrity. These experiences prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

The school provides helpful careers education and guidance for pupils. This includes information about apprenticeships. Pupils are well supported to make ambitious choices for their future lives.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value leaders' consideration of their well-being and workload. The proprietor and governors know the school well. They have strong oversight of the school's strengths and areas for development. The proprietor ensures that the premises are well-maintained and equipped with sufficient facilities to support the needs of pupils. The school knows and upholds its responsibilities under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The standards are consistently met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, teachers' checking of what pupils have learned is not as effective as it could be. Subsequent learning does not take into account pupils' prior knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge well over

time. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment effectively so that pupils learn and remember the curriculum successfully in all subjects.

- The school's systems to identify, track and monitor those pupils who are weaker readers are underdeveloped. This means that some of the weakest readers do not receive the support that they need in a timely and effective way. This hinders their learning of the curriculum and prevents them from achieving as well as they should. The school should ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need to close any gaps in their reading knowledge.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	119856
DfE registration number	889/6004
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10342011
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Islamic Educational Society
Chair	Hasan Desai
Headteacher	Nikhat Pardesi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1800
Telephone number	01254 261 573
Website	www.alislah.org.uk
Email address	head@alislah.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 to 4 November 2021

Information about this school

- The school is located on one site at 108 Audley Range, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1TF.
- The school is an Islamic faith secondary school.
- The school is registered to admit up to 245 pupils.
- The named proprietor on the Department for Education's (DfE) website 'Get Information About Schools' (GIAS) states that the proprietor is The Islamic Education Society. However, the named proprietor on GIAS is not accurate. The proprietor is an individual who is Hasan Desai. At the time of the inspection, the school had contacted the DfE to make this amendment.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in November 2021, when the school was judged to be good in all areas.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the proprietor, governors, including the chair of governors, trustees and the headteacher. They also spoke with other senior leaders, subject leaders and a representative of a local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and citizenship. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors reviewed the school's policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and their education. They talked with staff and pupils about pupils' personal development and pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils and staff about the school. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors also considered the views of parents expressed through the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the standards. As part of these checks, an inspector made a tour of the school's premises, accompanied by a school leader.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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