

Quwwat Ul Islam Girls' School

16 Chaucer Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9NB

Inspection dates

24–27 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders, including trustees, are committed to making sure pupils achieve well and play an active and full part in British society. They have made sure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher is pivotal in securing significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. A sharper assessment system, together with better training and support for staff, are proving to be key drivers for success. However, good or better practice is not shared well enough to raise the quality of teaching further.
- Overall attainment is above average in Year 6 and high at the end of key stage 4. Teaching is good. However, some teaching does not always address the needs of different ability groups. As a result, progress across key stages is uneven, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Trustees have a good overview of the school's performance. They provide support, guidance and challenge for senior leaders.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. Their willingness to do their best is a major factor in the good progress they make.
- The destinations of Year 11 pupils are impressive. Almost all go on to pursue further and/or higher education and, ultimately, professional careers. Nonetheless, some older pupils would like to study accredited courses in the creative arts.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Parents are very complimentary of the school's work in keeping their children safe and providing a good education.
- The early years provision requires improvement because children do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is especially so for the most able children in their literacy and mathematical skills.
- Teaching does not stretch the most able, and assessments are not always accurate. Children do not have enough opportunities to learn and play outside, or to write on their own. As a result, they do not make good gains in their independent writing and creative skills.

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?

- Secure high-quality teaching by ensuring that:
 - all teachers consistently meet the needs of different ability groups, especially the most able
 - effective practice in school is used to support weaker teaching
 - older pupils have the opportunity to study creative courses at GCSE level.
- Improve the early years provision, by:
 - assessing and recording children’s progress accurately
 - making sure that the most able children are given work which promotes their early literacy and mathematical skills effectively
 - providing further opportunities for children to learn and develop outside, to maximise progress which takes into account children’s interests
 - giving children more real-life contexts to write for a purpose.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders, including trustees, have made sure that all the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher has instigated much needed improvements. She is well supported by two effective senior leaders. This is securing demonstrable differences to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders are currently in the process of recruiting more leaders, because they know that capacity needs to be bolstered in order to accelerate the pace of improvement. Together with trustees, they are determined to make sure that pupils fulfil their potential. This concerted approach means that current pupils are making better progress than previously, across all key stages and in all subjects.
- Nonetheless, although all of the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage are met, leaders know there is more work to be done to secure better provision for the youngest children.
- Senior leaders know what effective practice looks like. They model this for teachers, and staff receive professional development and training. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving. Leaders and teachers are reflective practitioners, and frequently review and refine their skills. Nonetheless, there is more scope to share good or better practice in school.
- Sharper analysis of assessment and monitoring information provides senior leaders with a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This informs the improvement plan well, and enables leaders to target efforts and resources in the right places.
- Senior leaders use information on the progress pupils' make to make incisive judgements about how well pupils are doing. They now judge more accurately the impact teaching has on raising pupils' overall achievement. Any pupil at risk of falling behind is identified early, and interventions are put in place to address pupils' misconceptions or difficulties. This is particularly successful for those pupils who find learning difficult, and for the small minority of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects, which cover all of the independent school standards. However, key stage 4 pupils confirm that they would like to study accredited courses in the creative arts. This would build on the creative and artistic skills they have developed in primary and key stage 3 classes.
- Extra-curricular activities enhance pupils learning effectively. There are many opportunities to bring learning to life through visits and visitors, as well as practical activities within school, including rowing, martial arts and gymnastics.
- Pupils contribute significantly to the local and wider community, from raising funds for charities to singing in the choir at local hospitals. The religious education and citizenship programmes of study promote pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Partnership work with other schools and organisations actively promote fundamental

British values. Pupils have a keen sense of democracy, the political system, the role of law and the justice system. They display respect and tolerance for differences in society, including religions and the protected characteristics outlined in the Equalities Act. Regular debates heighten pupils' sense of moral, ethical and social justice, such as whether it is acceptable to be gay and a Muslim. Leaders are rightly proud of how well they promote equality and tackle discrimination head on.

Governance

- Trustees share the high expectations of senior leaders, and are equally ambitious for pupils. They know how well the school is performing, and keep a close check on leaders' work. Trustees are informed of the school's performance through regular meetings and from their own focused observations and reports. As a result, they provide senior leaders with the right balance of challenge and support. Trustees make sure that they meet their statutory responsibilities. This includes protecting pupils from harm, through regular reviews of safeguarding procedures and the impact they have on pupils' safety and welfare. Trustees are determined that all pupils take full advantage of what society can offer them. They explained that, 'we do not want the girls to be cocooned in an Islamic environment' and, therefore, 'we will not bend from adverse pressure within the local community'. Trustees are single-minded in making sure pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is an appropriate safeguarding policy on the school's website which takes into account current government guidelines.
- There is a concerted effort by leaders and staff to ensure that pupils' safety and welfare are given the highest priority. Senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead and two deputies, are fully aware of local risks that could pose a threat to the safety of pupils. They ensure that staff have regular training, including workshops, to enable them to be vigilant in spotting any pupils at potential risk of harm, including from female genital mutilation and radicalisation. All concerns are reported to the appropriate authorities. Liaison work with other agencies is strong, resulting in effective support for pupils and their families when required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this to plan work to secure a clear progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers explain and show pupils what they are going to learn. As a result, pupils understand what they need to do in order to achieve success.
- The recent focus on highlighting strengths in learning and pupils' next steps are powerful tools in moving pupils' learning on, at a strong pace. Teachers are increasingly providing the most able pupils with work that makes them think hard about their learning, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers identify pupils who have struggled and help them understand their work in lessons. Strategies to boost the achievement of younger pupils are put in place in school

time. Older pupils receive targeted booster sessions after school.

- Nonetheless, there remain some inconsistencies in how well teachers use assessment information to pitch work at the right level of difficulty for all ability groups. As a consequence, there are times when work is either too easy or too hard. This wastes valuable learning time, notably for most-able pupils.
- Pupils have good opportunities to discuss their work, and teachers ask searching questions. This encourages pupils to clarify their thinking. Pupils are confident speakers and enjoy volunteering their ideas to each other. They present their ideas to promote advocacy, lobbying and voting with confidence and passion.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to do their best. They take pride in their work, and usually present their work neatly. Teamwork is strong. For example, secondary-aged pupils systematically complete scientific experiments together, sharing their understanding and deepening their learning.
- Senior leaders know that primary-aged pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to plan and investigate scientific concepts. They plan to implement a new approach to teaching pupils scientific enquiry skills more effectively.
- The recent focus on raising achievement in reading, through the regular, focused teaching of comprehension and phonic skills, is strengthening pupils' fluency and confidence in reading. Older and younger pupils who read to inspectors did so with fluency and good comprehension skills. All pupils confirm that they read every day and enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Pupils learn essential writing skills effectively, and apply these skills well when writing in different styles. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and in other subjects to develop fluency.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils told inspectors that, because this is a small school, staff know them extremely well. They say that staff are always there for them.
- The pastoral care officer provides confidential counselling for pupils and their families. When exploring issues around mental health problems, older pupils told inspectors that every school should have a pastoral care officer, so that all pupils benefit from similar care and help. This typifies pupils' sense of fairness and ability to empathise with others.
- The positive and nurturing approach of the school raises pupils' self-esteem and confidence, while simultaneously enabling pupils to be kind and supportive to their friends.
- Leaders are alert to those pupils who may feel under pressure to perform well in the examinations. They use the expertise of mental health professionals to explore triggers and solutions.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of how to keep themselves safe, because senior leaders promote an open, honest and safe culture. As a result, pupils are confident that their

concerns are listened to and acted upon. There are regular workshops regarding e-safety, road safety and radicalisation, as well as lessons to encourage pupils to make the right choices in order to protect themselves from harm.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff implement the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils' good behaviour is recognised and celebrated in class and assemblies.
- Pupils are proud of their school, and try their best to meet adults' high expectations. This results in calm and purposeful lessons.
- The very few incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately. Pupils know the different forms bullying can take. They understand that it is their responsibly to report any such incidents.
- Attendance figures have improved, and now the majority of pupils attend school regularly. High attendance is rewarded weekly. Senior leaders have taken a tough stance with parents of the small minority of pupils who are persistently absent, issuing fines for three or more days of absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils in all key stages make good progress from their different starting points. There are no significant differences between ethnic groups or ability groups. This includes the most able pupils, those who find learning difficult and the small minority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school's achievement information demonstrates that the majority of pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are at least in line with national age-related expectations. By the end of Year 2 in 2017, pupils' attainment was above average. This represents strong progress in all subjects, including in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across key stage 2. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2017 was well above average.
- Older pupils in key stages 3 and 4 continue to make strong progress. In 2017, pupils attained highly. The GCSE results for most subjects were well above average, including in English, mathematics and science. A third of pupils achieved the top grades in English, with almost half in mathematics and science.
- Work in pupils' books reveals that progress is uneven across the school. The main activities in lessons are sometimes pitched at middle-ability pupils, which do not always address the needs of lower-ability and higher-ability pupils.
- Senior leaders are determined that pupils will not be shackled or limited in their life-chances, because they are Muslim and female. Senior leaders secure impartial careers guidance for older pupils. Visits from universities, visitors from different professions, events such as careers fairs and workshops open up a range of potential career pathways to pupils, as well as for work experience. All Year 11 pupils in 2017 went on to further education placements, thus enabling most pupils to study the right subjects to pursue their aspirations. Current pupils in Year 11 have all been offered conditional places in

different colleges for next year. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children do not have enough opportunities to explore and learn in different ways outside the classroom. This does not promote children's learning as effectively as it should in all areas, and particularly so in their physical development.
- Although children's progress is assessed, records of some children's achievements are inaccurate. There is insufficient evidence for the progress children make in their early literacy and mathematical skills, particularly for the most able children. As a result, activities are often too easy and do not stretch these children sufficiently.
- In 2017, assessments indicated that all children made at least good progress. However, weaknesses in current assessments cast some doubt on the accuracy of previous assessment information.
- Inspection observations confirm that most children are currently making adequate progress rather than strong progress. Although children are ready to start Year 1, they could achieve so much more.
- Senior leaders have made sure that all of the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage and the relevant independent school standards are met.
- Some activities are stimulating, and capture children's imagination and interest. However, there are too few opportunities for children to explore and learn based on their own interests and fascinations. This does not always encourage children to find things out for themselves, to sustain their concentration and to learn more deeply.
- Children are taught early literacy skills, including phonics, to develop their reading and writing skills. Inspection observations demonstrate that children are skilled in reading and can spell simple words with their teacher. However, children are not always able to make marks and write independently in a meaningful and relevant context on their own. This inhibits their reading and writing progress.
- The headteacher oversees the early years provision, supporting the new early years teacher. She has a good understanding of what constitutes effective early years practice.
- Staff develop strong and warm relationships with children. As a consequence, children feel safe, behave well and cooperate. They take turns and listen carefully to each other and to adults.
- The school is working hard to foster stronger links with parents through regular reading sessions. Children also take 'Layla', the doll, home to encourage parents and children to talk, write and share their learning experiences at home and in school. This is beginning to secure greater engagement from parents.

School details

Unique reference number	134627
DfE registration number	316/6066
Inspection number	10026293

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	Muslim day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Quwwat Ul Islam Society
Chair	Salim Kidiya
Headteacher	Shazia Member
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,800–£3,000
Telephone number	020 85484736
Website	http://quwwatulislam.com
Email address	info@quwwatulislam.com
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2014

Information about this school

- Quwwat Ul Islam Girls' School is a Muslim day school, which opened in 2003. It is registered for Reception-aged children, and primary and secondary pupils from Year 1 to Year 11.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Many are bilingual and, currently, only a small minority are at the early stages of learning English.
- There are very few pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. One pupil has an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are mainly from Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali heritages. The majority of the

pupils travel from East London and the surrounding areas.

- Since the last standard inspection, there have been a number of staff changes, including the appointment of a headteacher, head of the secondary department, a business manager and chair of the governing body.
- The school's last full inspection took place in January 2014, when the school's overall effectiveness was found to be good. All bar one of the independent school standards were met. The statutory regulations for the early years were met.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across all key stages and in the Reception class, in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. All observations were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Pupils' work was scrutinised during observations, and additional work sampling was undertaken.
- Inspectors explored pupils' views through informal discussions with pupils and talking to groups of pupils. Inspectors listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and 6.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the chair and other members of the trust.
- Questionnaires submitted by 24 members of staff were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at 28 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the beginning of the school day and held a telephone conversation with one parent.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's self-evaluation; development plans; checks on the quality of teaching; safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments; various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour; and the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rick Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

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