

Inspection of Islamia School for Girls

129 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6PE

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

The inspection found that safeguarding is not effective. Leaders' knowledge of safeguarding practice is weak. Leaders have not prioritised the safety and well-being of the pupils. They do not check carefully that safeguarding systems are effective. Pupils said that teachers would deal with any bullying that may occur. However, in the online survey, a fifth of pupils said that they could not identify an adult at the school they would talk to if something were worrying them.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are respectful of their teachers and each other. They like being in a small school and typically described it as 'one large family'.

Pupils are motivated to learn. Leaders want pupils to do well and achieve high GCSE outcomes. From Year 9 onwards, what pupils learn is determined by GCSE content. The curriculum lacks ambition because pupils spend three years covering subject content that is designed to be covered in two years.

Leaders help pupils to learn about the wider world. Pupils enjoy taking part in public-speaking competitions and schemes to develop their wider skills and potential. They also organise a range of fundraising activities for various charities.

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

The curriculum lacks ambition over the time pupils are at the school. High GCSE results are the driver for leaders' curriculum plans. In Years 7 and 8, teachers do not have time to cover key subject content in depth and breadth before pupils start GCSE courses in Year 9.

Pupils study a wide variety of subjects during their time at the school. Pupils must select a broad range of subjects to study at GCSE. These include history, art, geography and computer science. All pupils study a modern foreign language until Year 11. Pupils in all year groups also have lessons in physical education (PE) and food technology.

However, in Years 9 to 11, curriculum plans focus on examination skills and GCSE examination content. Leaders replaced the previous Year 9 programme of learning with commencing study for GCSEs so that pupils' studying for GCSE is stretched over three years. Leaders' emphasis on GCSE results means that pupils do not benefit from a broad and rich education. The curriculum has too narrow a focus on GCSE specifications.

Teaching staff are knowledgeable. Their enthusiasm for their subject specialisms is plain to see and rubs off on pupils. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed their learning. They said that teachers help them when they find something difficult and show them how to achieve high grades in the GCSE examinations.

Teachers build opportunities to recap important knowledge into lessons. This helps pupils to remember key concepts and facts. Pupils show understanding of what they have learned. For example, pupils in English in Year 9 talked about dramatic irony in the play 'An inspector calls'. They drew on their knowledge of historical events referenced in the play.

Staff check what pupils have learned on a regular basis. They know their pupils well and can spot quickly should any pupils fall behind. Leaders and staff provide additional help to pupils who may need to catch up. Leaders and staff do not routinely adapt the curriculum to the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders have updated their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. It reflects the new statutory guidance for relationships and sex education. Leaders have started to deliver this programme. They have consulted with parents and carers and helped them to understand the programme changes.

Pupils are taught about healthy relationships and how to improve their mental and physical health. They enjoy their weekly PE lessons and are encouraged to see them as a good way to unwind. Teachers talk to pupils about online safety and how to avoid dangers outside school.

Pupils are keen readers. The school's stock of high-quality texts is limited. As a result, some pupils buy books for themselves and recommend them to each other.

Lessons are calm and learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils are attentive and keen to participate in lessons and discussions.

Leaders aim to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and to inspire pupils to be global citizens as well as Islamic citizens. Pupils are encouraged to understand and respect differences. Leaders also teach pupils about rights and responsibilities that affect different parts of society. For example, pupils in Year 10 discussed parental rights for married and unmarried fathers. Pupils in Year 11 attend workshops to help prepare them for leaving school, which include advice on working in a mixed-gender environment.

Pupils enjoy taking part in activities outside lessons, such as the Arsenal inter-faith football programme. Experiences help pupils to develop leadership skills and learn how to work in a team. Pupils enjoy working with others from different year groups. The school council organises various fundraising events, such as a sponsored walk and a charity dinner. Some of this has been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders hope to restart these soon. Pupils have opportunities to take part in sports after school. They like the different school outings on offer, such as visits to museums.

Pupils have high aspirations for themselves. They learn about different careers and their post-16 options. Speakers from different sectors talk to pupils about their professions.

Trustees do not have sufficient oversight of leaders' work. They have not ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Trustees are not clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have not held leaders to account, nor supported them effectively.

Leaders and trustees have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Leaders have not established a strong culture of safeguarding. They have not sufficiently considered the potential risks for their pupils. On-site health and safety concerns have not been addressed with any urgency. Inspectors found three outdated safeguarding policies on the school's website. Leaders published an updated policy during the inspection, but it contained limited guidance on some aspects of safeguarding.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders do not have robust procedures in place to check their systems and processes for safeguarding pupils' well-being.

Pupils have open access to the buildings of the primary school that shares the school site. Pupils and staff from both schools freely enter the premises of both schools. Leaders have not assessed the risks to pupils from this arrangement. Leaders have not made sure that storage cupboards with hazardous materials are securely fastened.

Staff are unsure how to report concerns about pupils. Leaders have not given clear guidance about this. They do not follow the procedures set out in their policy. Safeguarding records lack relevant details and some concerns have not been logged.

Leaders at all levels do not demonstrate secure knowledge of statutory safeguarding guidance. Some leaders are unsure how to follow up concerns. Omissions and inaccuracies in the single central record needed to be rectified during the inspection.

Leaders do not take prompt action to ensure that the school building is well maintained. A large number of electrical issues, many of them requiring urgent attention, and a vermin infestation, have not been addressed swiftly.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Leaders and trustees do not have procedures in place to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure

and follow the latest guidance. Leaders should put systems in place to check the effectiveness of their work and make sure that safeguarding is fully effective.

- The procedure for reporting and logging concerns about pupils is not understood and followed systematically by all staff and leaders. There is a risk that concerns may be missed and that leaders do not have a full picture of safeguarding concerns. Leaders should ensure that they establish a clear system for reporting and logging any issues that may arise. They should provide guidance and training for staff so that they are fully aware of the procedures to follow.
- A large number of pupils did not feel that they have an adult at school whom they could talk to if they were worried about something. Leaders should establish a culture in the school in which pupils can feel confident to report any concerns to school staff.
- Leaders have not drawn up and implemented a risk assessment for the open access to the primary school on the shared site and for staff and pupils from that school accessing the school's site. Leaders must draw up and implement risk assessments and put appropriate measures in place to safeguard pupils.
- Leaders do not demonstrate secure knowledge of statutory safeguarding guidance. They are sometimes unclear about the procedures to follow. The safeguarding policy does not include sufficient detail. Leaders have not ensured that the single central record contains all the relevant pre-recruitment checks.
- When pupils leave the school, leaders do not follow the necessary procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders should ensure that leaders at all levels receive high-quality training so that they can carry out their statutory duties effectively. The safeguarding policy should reflect statutory guidance.
- Leaders have not taken urgent action to address concerns about site maintenance. Problems with electrical installations were highlighted in a report in June 2021. Leaders had not started to take action on this before inspectors enquired about the report. The ground floor currently has a mouse infestation. There is evidence that this is not a recent problem. Leaders should ensure that they take immediate and effective action when health and safety concerns are raised.
- Pupils study their GCSE subjects for three years. Curriculum plans do not go beyond the subject content set out in examination specifications. Leaders do not use the extended time allocated for GCSE study to deepen pupils' learning. Pupils' learning in key stage 3 is cut short. They do not learn subjects in much depth. Leaders should ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn subjects in greater depth at key stage 3 to prepare them for the next stage in their education. They should plan an ambitious curriculum in both key stage 3 and key stage 4.
- Leaders have identified pupils who need extra support. However, support for these pupils and pupils with SEND is not adapted to their individual needs to ensure that they receive the right help. Leaders should ensure that the support for all pupils is finely tuned to their needs.

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

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	101575
DfE registration number	304/6069
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10194757
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	97
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Islamia Schools Ltd
Chair	Hasana Islam
Headteacher	Amzad Ali (Acting Headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,500
Telephone number	020 7372 3472
Website	www.islamiaschools.com
Email address	admin@islamiaschools.com
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 February 2017

Information about this school

- This is an Islamic secondary school for girls. The school was founded in 1989. Trustees from Islamia Schools Ltd provide governance for the school.
- The acting headteacher is also headteacher of the partner boys' school, Brondesbury College. The acting headteacher took up post in October 2020. An acting deputy headteacher took up post in January 2021.
- The school is on the same site as Islamia Primary School. Parts of the building and outside space are shared.
- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision for their pupils.
- The previous standard inspection took place in February 2017.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, another deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader, one trustee from the proprietary body, subject teachers and members of staff.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history and PSHE education. Inspectors met with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning. Other subjects were considered as well.
- Inspectors discussed with leaders, staff and pupils the arrangements for safeguarding. Inspectors also looked at information and procedures related to safeguarding, including the single central record and case records.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies and procedures related to health and safety, attendance, behaviour and assessment.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in the playground.
- Inspectors considered the 85 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 17 responses to the staff survey and 18 responses to the online survey for parents, Parent View.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Bedeau

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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