

Inspection of Bolton Islamic Girls School

Weston House, Weston Street, Bolton BL3 2AW

Inspection dates: 19–21 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be a part of the Bolton Islamic Girls School. They describe their classmates and teachers as a 'family'. Pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for in this small, friendly school.

Most pupils behave very well. They arrive in good time for the start of the school day and for their lessons. Pupils settle down quickly in their lessons, and they work hard to complete the activities that teachers set them. Staff deal well with any rare instances of bullying.

Teachers listen to pupils' ideas. Older pupils have set up a breakfast club. This enables pupils to socialise and eat together before school starts. Pupils enjoy the clubs they have chosen, such as netball.

Pupils enjoy most of their lessons. They find what they learn in subjects such as art and history interesting. However, frequent changes to teaching staff have frustrated pupils. Pupils feel that some teachers, when they start, do not take account of what pupils already know and can do. Some teachers do not make sure that they teach any key knowledge that pupils have missed. This hampers pupils' progress.

The oldest pupils report that they spend lots of time practising and revising for external examinations. Some say that they find this repetitive.

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

The quality of education is not good enough across some subjects. Leaders have left teachers too much to their own devices. Leaders have not checked curriculum plans and schemes of work carefully enough. Some of these documents lack detail. They do not outline the essential knowledge that pupils must learn. The science scheme of work does not include some crucial content, for example photosynthesis. Pupils do not learn as much as they should.

As a result of weak curriculum planning, pupils have gaps in their knowledge in some subjects. This makes learning new knowledge tricky because pupils do not make connections between topics and concepts. For example, in mathematics some older pupils struggle with more complex calculations. This is because the knowledge that they need to tackle these problems is not secure. For younger pupils, teachers spend too much time revisiting the key stage 2 mathematics curriculum. Pupils already know and can do this. Although the quality of mathematics teaching has improved recently, there is still much more to do.

Conversely, pupils achieve well in some subjects, for example art and history. In these subjects, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to good effect. They plan learning so that pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. These teachers make sure that they address any gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils can recall

previous learning well. For example, pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of the discovery of the 'Tollund Man' and the Treaty of Versailles.

Overall, pupils gain more academic qualifications than in the past. Pupils are also achieving higher grades than previously. For example, in art a high proportion of pupils gain the top grades at GCSE. Almost all pupils move on successfully to schools and colleges to continue their studies.

Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. Bullying is rare. They listen attentively to their teachers and follow instructions promptly. Pupils are keen to learn, and they take pride in their work. Pupils want to do well. Many pupils aspire to attend university. That said, a small minority of older pupils are less positive about school. This group of pupils feel let down by frequent changes of teachers and the negative impact that this has had on their education in the past.

Leaders and teachers place great importance on pupils' personal development. However, leaders do not make sure that their programme is sufficiently well planned. Leaders do not consider carefully enough what experiences would most benefit the pupils and when these should take place. Consequently, activities and experiences, such as mental health awareness sessions, are not delivered at the most appropriate time.

Pupils understand some of the challenges they may face as a Muslim woman in modern Britain. They are knowledgeable about the differences in beliefs and values between Islamic and secular society. They discuss and debate topics such as abortion rights and homosexuality. This helps them better understand and respect different people's different views.

Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' attendance have paid dividends. Pupils' attendance is high. Pupils are in school, on time, every day.

Leaders have employed an external consultant to help them identify and assess any possible special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils may have. Leaders act on the advice and guidance given to them. However, teachers have not had the training and support that they need to ensure that these pupils thrive.

Directors and governors have allowed matters such as finance to take their attention from the quality of education and other important aspects of the school's work. As a result, the independent school standards have not been consistently met.

As the school has grown, leaders have not made sure that they have developed more suitable systems and procedures to support the efficient running of a larger school. During the inspection, leaders struggled to provide some of the documents requested by the team, for example the first-aid policy. Often, other documents that were provided, such as the behaviour policy, were out of date. Moreover, directors and governors do not provide sufficient support and challenge to school leaders to determine the most pressing issues and make the necessary improvements.

While the school premises have adaptations, such as a ramp to the main entrance and disabled toilet, leaders have not drawn up an accessibility plan. This is a statutory requirement set out in schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out all of the required checks to make sure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. All staff are up to date in their training. Staff pass on any concerns to the appropriate person. Pupils are confident to share any worries that they may have with an adult in the school. Pupils trust adults to deal with any issues effectively. Leaders resolve any rare bullying incidents swiftly. Pupils learn about particular risks, such as forced marriage and cyberbullying, in assemblies, tutor sessions and the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The content and sequencing of learning in some subjects, for example mathematics and science, are not well planned. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that curriculum leaders for these subjects are given enough support to help them plan the content and sequencing of knowledge in sufficient detail.
- Leaders do not routinely check on what and how well pupils are learning across the school. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate view of how well pupils are achieving across the curriculum. This means that leaders do not take effective action to address any weaknesses. Leaders should make sure that they evaluate how well all pupils are learning across the curriculum. They should make sure that any issues are resolved quickly so that they do not impact negatively on pupils' learning.
- The school does not consistently meet independent school standards. This means that there are weaknesses in some aspects of the school's work, including the quality of education, welfare, health and safety, and leadership and management. Directors and governors must ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties, including those under the Equality Act 2010. Directors and governors must make sure that all parts of the independent school standards are met consistently.
- Directors and trustees do not provide sufficient support and challenge to school leaders to determine the most pressing issues and make the necessary improvements. Consequently, the quality of education, personal development and leadership and management are not good enough. Directors and governors should carry out their roles in a way that improves the effectiveness of the school.

How can I feed back my views?

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

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

School details

Unique reference number	138498
DfE registration number	350/6001
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10112078
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	118
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Makkah Academy Trust
Chair	Kamran Khan
Headteacher	Zakia Maqbool
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1600
Telephone number	01204 771 570
Website	www.boltonislamicgirlsschool.org.uk
Email address	info@boltonislamicgirlsschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–12 January 2017

Information about this school

- This school has an Islamic ethos.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietorial body has changed. The school is now run by Makkah Academy Trust. The proprietor's interests continue to be represented in the school by a governing body. A number of governors are also directors of the trust. Some of the governors were also members of the previous governing body.
- This school uses no alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- During the inspection, we held meetings with the headteacher and teachers. We spoke with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. These members of the governing body are also directors of the proprietorial body.
- We spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.
- We considered the 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 14 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and the 18 responses to Ofsted's pupils' survey.
- We met with those people responsible for the school, scrutinised a wide range of documentation and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. We also considered the survey responses from staff, pupils and parents around safeguarding.
- We observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school. We spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of them.
- As part of this inspection, we considered how leaders plan and organise the history, art, science and mathematics curriculums. We spoke to teachers and subject leaders. We visited lessons. We talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books as well as other evidence of their learning.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour; and
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first-aid policy.

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; and
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school does not comply with the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Paragraph 3 of schedule 10 requires that schools have an accessibility plan.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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