

# Ayesha Siddiqah Girls' School

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

This was a light touch educational inspection which focused principally on: the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## Information about the school

Ayesha Siddiqah Girls' School is an independent secondary school for Muslim girls. The school opened in April 2007 and is registered to admit up to 200 pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. There are currently 98 pupils on roll. The school has expanded since the last inspection to admit pupils in Years 10 and 11. There are plans to extend further with the addition of a sixth form but a proposal has not yet been submitted to the Department for Education for approval. The pupils are of diverse heritages and come from various parts of London. The vast majority are either bilingual or are at an advanced stage of learning English as an additional language. None has a statement of special educational needs.

The school is situated in the centre of Southall, in the London Borough of Ealing, normally occupying two floors of the Islamic Centre. An extensive building and refurbishment programme for the entire building means that the school currently operates from a reduced number of rooms on one floor. From September 2011 the school will occupy the second and third floors. The proprietors run the school as a charitable trust with a governing body and aim to provide an education to its pupils that conforms to the National Curriculum and incorporates religious teachings according to Islam. The school was last inspected on 30 January 2008 and at that time met all but five of the regulations. The headteacher was appointed a year ago.

## Evaluation of the school

Ayesha Siddiqah Girls' School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils, but the welfare, health and safety of pupils is inadequate. This is because insufficient attention has been given to safeguarding pupils in relation to the recruitment of staff and health and safety. The school successfully meets its aims, in integrating the National Curriculum with a suitably high focus on Islamic teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, supported well by the religious and cultural aspects of the curriculum. They make satisfactory progress overall as a result of the satisfactory curriculum and teaching. Over half of the parents and carers responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and most are happy with their child's experience at the school; although provided with a range of useful information about the school and their child's progress, they are not given details about some of the additional information available on request. Improvements since the last inspection include more frequent assessments by teachers and a tracking system to make better use of the information. Changes have also been made to the curriculum. Schemes of work and lesson plans are of better quality and provide a level of consistency that helps teachers to plan for pupils' different needs more effectively. The school does not yet meet 15 regulations for the registration of independent schools.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection as a result of the developments implemented by the current headteacher. Pupils now study a wider range of subjects, including the recently introduced subject of art, and this has increased the options available at GCSE level. Curriculum planning has improved and now gives clear guidance for teachers to plan work at appropriate levels and with suitable progression of learning through subjects. In response to issues raised at the time of the last inspection, the scheme of work for geography has been suitably reviewed to provide continuity of study across Key Stages 3 and 4. The scheme for physical education (PE) is now in place but the programme is not well planned or sufficiently regular for girls in Key Stage 4. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are taught history, which includes learning about world history and Islamic historical perspectives. However, there is no scheme of work or planned provision for history in Key Stage 4. This has been identified by the school as an area for development so as to give a better curricular balance for older pupils. The scheme of work for design and technology provides good opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding of the world around them in relation to fashion, textiles and durability. This is a real strength of the school as seen in the final products of pupils' work displayed in the classroom. There are clear schemes of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) including learning about healthy eating, conflicts, anti-bullying, and cultural diversity. These programmes are well supported by Islamic studies, making a significant contribution to pupils' good spiritual, social and moral development.

Islamic studies are taught three times a week in Key Stage 3, enabling pupils to learn about Islamic principles and practices. These include learning about manners and morals, beliefs, *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad). These subjects are continued through religious studies in Key Stage 4. This also helps pupils to understand the nature of Islam, its religion, beliefs and practices, and to be able to make comparisons with other religions. Qur'an studies focus on teaching the *tajweed* (melodious) style of recitation with a major focus on

the pronunciation of sounds in words. Pupils can choose to learn Arabic or Urdu as a modern foreign language in both key stages leading to GCSE level.

Responses from parents, carers and pupils overwhelmingly refer to a lack of trips and visits. Their comments are fair because there are limited opportunities to extend and enliven the curriculum in this way. Similarly, with the exception of a booster class, there are no extra-curricular activities.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory and teaching is sometimes good, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress over their time at the school. Teachers are enthusiastic and keen to improve their teaching. They have improved their planning and marking by conscientiously applying what they have gained from the training provided. Characteristically, teachers focus more on transmitting knowledge and less on getting pupils involved in exploring the learning themselves. This sometimes leads to pupils being passive learners and becoming too dependent on teacher input. Conversely, when given opportunities to be more involved, pupils show great enthusiasm for learning and do well. This was seen in a science lesson, where pupils were encouraged to explore the relationship between energy and electricity, and in an English lesson where they were given good opportunities to debate the concept of power in the novel *Of Mice and Men*.

Assessment is now satisfactory and much improved since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has established a system to track pupils' attainments. Teachers assess pupils' work more frequently, both through end of unit tests and evaluations, and by conscientiously marking their work with helpful comments and corrections. As a result, there is better attention to pupils' individual learning needs and styles. In addition, with the introduction of two teaching groups for English, mathematics and science, teachers are able to tailor the work to pupils' different abilities more successfully.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. Attendance is low at times as a result of family and religious holidays abroad. Over half of the pupils responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and over half of them wrote lengthy comments about their views of the school. They clearly have strong views and are able to express them well. While they are very positive and appreciative about the faith and cultural aspects of their education, some would like more challenge in lessons. They would also like and to be involved in more extra-curricular activities and events that would help to extend their contribution to the wider community. Older pupils can see how the school has improved since it opened and speak warmly about the support they receive from staff. They feel well prepared for the future, and have an appropriate understanding of British public services and institutions. Pupils of all ages show a strong sense of right and wrong, alongside high levels of respect for staff. This respect extends also towards one another and the many differences that their cultural backgrounds bring to their friendships. They

enjoy learning about one another's customs, as well as those from other religions and this sets a tone in the school of racial and cultural harmony.

## **Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety**

Inadequate welfare, health and safety stem from a lack of robust implementation of policies regarding staff recruitment and general aspects of ensuring pupils' safety. Since her appointment, the headteacher has rationalised and improved some aspects of health and safety such as regular checks to ensure fire safety and additional training for first aiders and a fire marshal. Responses to any identified weaknesses have been prompt, appropriate and conscientious, including immediate checks to ensure that all staff had a suitability check by the end of this inspection. Record keeping has improved such as staff files and, in consultation with the governing body, relevant policies such as those for child protection are in place and suitably reviewed. Staff have had suitable training for safeguarding pupils. However, the policy for recruiting staff has not been implemented robustly enough. As a result, suitability checks on a number of staff have not been undertaken, others have not been carried out soon enough, and there are gaps in some of the information about staff, such as for medical fitness. References are not always dated or specific to the job applied for and there are no records of interviews. Contracts of employment have been inappropriately confirmed before the relevant range of checks have been completed and evaluated. A single central register of staff is in place covering the required suitability checks but it is incomplete because not all staff and governors are included on it.

Risk assessments are insufficient, particularly in relation to potential issues to consider at this time of significant work on the building. Some aspects of health and safety are to be addressed as part of the building and refurbishment work but currently regulations are unmet in respect of separate toilet facilities for staff and pupils, windows that are not suitably restrained when open, some areas of the building that are not suitably clean or tidy and there is no written plan as required under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended. A new heating system will reduce the need for portable heaters but these and other items of portable electricity equipment have not been checked and trailing leads sometimes pose potential trip hazards. Improvements to the premises will not address the ongoing issue of a lack of suitable space for pupils to play safely. With the exception of the windows, which are to be replaced as part of the building refurbishment, classrooms are well maintained. They are bright, welcoming and conducive to learning.

Pupils would like more opportunities to ensure good health, particularly to be able to get out in the fresh air each day. Inspectors concur, as the lack of planned physical activities to address the lack of on-site PE and outside play areas means that opportunities are too limited. Some pupils worry about their safety during the current building work because they do not know enough about what is happening. Nevertheless, the PSHE and science programmes and some aspects of the Islamic

curriculum provide good opportunities to encourage pupils to be safe and healthy, emphasising personal hygiene and healthy eating.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that the curriculum policies for PE and history are supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and are implemented effectively for both key stages (paragraph 2(1))
- ensure that the curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age sufficient experiences in PE and human and social learning (paragraph 2(2)(a)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- ensure that there are effective measures to ensure pupils' health and safety which have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (DfES 0803/2001) (paragraph 11).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- verify that no member of staff is barred from working with children (paragraph 19(2)(a))
- carry out appropriate checks to confirm each member of staff's medical fitness (paragraph 19(2)(b))
- make an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check for each member of staff before or as soon as is practicable after their appointment (paragraph 19(2)(c))
- complete the required checks in 19(2)(b) before making staff appointments (paragraph 19(3))
- ensure that the single central register shows that the required checks have been made for all appointed staff (paragraph 22(3))

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made)

- ensure that the single central register shows that the required checks have been made for members of the governing body (paragraph 22(6)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standards in part 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which take account of regulations 3 and 4 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(j))
- ensure that all classrooms and other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state (paragraph 23(m))
- ensure appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 23(s)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- inform parents and carers that they can request information regarding particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, the number of complaints registered under the formal procedures during the preceding school year, the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga\\_19950050\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1)

## Inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils				✓
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim day school
<b>Date school opened</b>	16 April 2007
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0      Girls: 98      Total: 98
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£2,500
<b>Address of school</b>	165–169 The Broadway Southall, Middlesex UB1 1LS
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8867 9284
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@ayeshasiddiqa.org.uk">info@ayeshasiddiqa.org.uk</a>
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms F Liyawdeen
<b>Proprietor</b>	Islamic Educational and Recreational Institute