

### **Bolton Muslim Girls' School**

Swan Lane,  
Bolton,  
BL3 6TQ.

Local authority: Bolton.

Dates of inspection: 23 January 2013.

Date of last inspection: This is the school's first S48 inspection.

Headteacher: Mr Mubaaruck Ibrahim.

Inspector's name: Mr Mohammad Ismail

### **School context**

Bolton Muslim Girls' School (BMGS) is a Voluntary Aided Specialist Language School for 11-16 year olds. The school currently has 553 students on roll and holds the Investor in Peoples Award, it is the only Muslim School to hold a Gold Award for Information Advice and Guidance and has been recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) as an Enterprise Register Centre. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) and Warwick University have also recognised BMGS as meeting the National Standards in Enterprise Education. In 2011 the SSAT and DfE recognised the school for being in the top 10% of outstanding schools for student progress. In 2012 the school was recognised by DfE as being in the top 200 schools for the English Baccalaureate. The school's mission statement is to provide within an Islamic environment a centre for educational excellence that develops and nurtures citizens of the future who will serve and contribute to the well-being of their communities. It aims; to nurture young Muslimahs who will embody all that is good within Islam; to foster a spirit of *ikram* (respect) and *khidmat* (service) for the wider community.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of BMGS are outstanding as a Muslim school**

The school's governing body through its spirituality and ethos committee provides guidance through its effective leadership of a leading scholar to ensure that the school's Islamic ethos is vigorously maintained. The school's Principal with advice from the Assistant principal for spirituality and the head of RE (Religious Education) offers a clear vision and steer. The RE team is fully supported by all members who are qualified for teaching in RE. All adults in the RE department are excellent practicing role models for their students. Students' behaviour is outstanding. Islamic practice and spirituality is clearly visible in their characters. In the school's council meeting with inspectors, they asserted their views in the most appropriate manner. The school through its council seeks students' views and considers them in any decision making. Their awareness about current affairs is good. They have clear plans and aspirations for their future. Their contribution in the community is very good which is based on the concept of 'The Big Society'. They admire their teachers and expressed very high regards for the Principal. All students make outstanding progress. The attainments in RE are above the national average. Students and staff show pride in the school and its Islamic ethos. The school's community is a multi-faith strong cohesive community, which provides a safe and enjoyable learning

environment. Students take part in collective worship. Students read and learn supplications. The school enjoys the support of parents and the local community. The school maintains close link with local mosques and Muslim schools in the area. The school has launched an excellent provision of extending spirituality to all areas of the curriculum. This project will be extended to other schools nationally. Students, staff and parents are constantly reminded of the Islamic ethos of the school. The school's documents include appropriate and necessary references to the holy Qur'an and *hadeeth* (the tradition of the holy Prophet peace be upon him (PBUH)). The classrooms and corridors are appropriately decorated with Islamic ethical themes and with students' beautiful art work.

### **Established strengths**

- Outstanding behaviour.
- Excellent leadership with effective management support.
- Outstanding Islamic teaching and curriculum.
- All adults in the school community are excellent role models for their pupils.
- Multicultural and multi-faith staff.
- RE curriculum linked across all areas of the school's curriculum.
- Optional after school provision of Islamic theology.

### **Focus for development**

- Maintaining the schools' academic achievements and standards and extending them to offer a variety of extra after school optional Islamic curricular activities.
- Ensure that the plans for a prayer hall (school's *masjid*) are included in the new building and a more reflective facility is provided than the present provision.
- Develop and enhance learners' curiosity and interests in various aspects of Islam.

### **The school, through its distinctive Islamic character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

The Principal and other members of the management and leadership team conduct regular meetings to review the resources in the RE department to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all students. Despite the new school building plan being annulled, the school is trying its best to address the requirement of students with special needs. The provision will tremendously benefit from the new building. The development of an Islamic library is in the process of being completed to enhance the spiritual aspect of RE. The school clearly demonstrates its firm commitment to its mission statement with assertion of its Islamic ethos that it provides a caring, safe and happy environment. This was evidently observed during lessons, around the school, in the school council meeting and in the prayer session. The school's strategic development plan outlined to create a spiritual environment to transform learning through a greater understanding of oneself and one's contributory role in the world. This is through the introduction of mentoring and pastoral support programmes that aid personal development of students in all aspects of their lives. The school has successfully developed a programme 'Living Islam' to allow learners to be well prepared to protect their culture and faith in a multi-cultural society and secure their identity. Parents are also involved in their children's learning through regular meetings, newsletters and the school's website. Different parents' events are held throughout the year. The school through its RE programme provides learners the opportunity to differentiate between right and wrong and to be aware of cultures different to themselves. For example, the inspector observed that students in a Y8

class were learning about `Islamic rites of passage at birth` the teacher beautifully compared the Islamic views with that of different cultures and faiths while presenting a cultural link between all of them. The whole school community enjoys the prayer facility, which is equipped with *wudoo* (pre prayer washing) facility. The school is in need of a prayer hall to enhance its spirituality. Students' work shows that students are making outstanding progress. There is an assessment and marking system in place. The school is making an excellent contribution towards community cohesion and it enjoys an excellent relationship with the community and other schools in the area.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The school's leadership with tremendous difficulties and demands for space in the school's building have managed to construct a pre prayer washing (*wudoo*) facility. The session for collective worship after midday prayer (*zuhur salat*) is currently offered in a sports hall during the winter. During the rest of the year collective worship is in the form of whole school assemblies, house assemblies and form assemblies where a wide range of topics are covered appropriately. For example, just before the Christmas the role and importance of *Isaa* PBH (Jesus) to Muslims and Christians was covered. During the Islamic new year the importance of *muharram* (1<sup>st</sup> month in Islamic calendar) was covered. A selection of *hadith* for every week is part of the school's assemblies' programme. In addition, it includes sessions for the recitation of the holy Qur'an and *nasheed* (Islamic songs). The school's assemblies' programme have excellent reflection on students' social, spiritual, moral and cultural development. On Fridays, students take part in the recitation and listening to *Surah Al Kahaf* (a very virtuous chapter from the holy Qur'an). Every lesson starts with collective reading of *al-fatiha* (the opening chapter) as a prayer and every lesson concludes with a collective reading of a prayer (*duaa of kaffarah*) in the most appropriate manner. As a result of this outstanding provision of collective worship, the students were found to be extremely respectful and caring.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

The Assistant principal for spirituality with the Head of RE, lead the provision with excellent talents and abilities. The RE department with support from the leadership team has successfully managed to create a learning environment which is stimulating and engaging. The school offers a personalised curriculum that meets the needs of each learner. There are excellent quality schemes of work for all subjects with long term, mid-term and short-term plans in place. This curriculum is broad and balanced and covers a wide range of topics. It includes Qur'an with the rules of *tajweed*, a selection from the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), *fiqh* (theology) Islamic history, manners and *nasheed* (Islamic songs). The school's personal social and health education is appropriately offered in line with Islamic guidance. The teaching is outstanding. All teachers in the RE department are subject specialists and the Head of RE is a qualified Islamic scholar (*alimah*). All teachers are excellent role models for their students. They have outstanding relationships with their students. Students enjoy their lessons, they ask questions and take active part in group discussions and learning activities. This was observed in a Y10 lesson of preparing and delivering a speech. Their behaviour was observed to be outstanding. There is a good quality marking and assessment system in place. Students' work is marked regularly. Their work shows that all of them are making outstanding progress with exceptional academic results. All students are helped to

choose a career or a course for their future. The school's art, information and communication technology provisions distinctly produce some excellent Islamic designs which are displayed in the school and on its website. The students show pride in their excellent work. There is an extra optional after school Islamic theology programme for students as part of Al Nur Supplementary School and the students have shown a keen interest in this supplementary provision.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as an Islamic school is outstanding**

Bolton Muslim Girls School is managed by an active governing body which is strongly rooted in the local mosque and community. The spirituality and ethos committee includes some leading scholars who are assigned with the task of ensuring that the school ethos is distinctly maintained. The Principal who is a practicing role model with a wealth of experience successfully leads the school. He is supported by his Assistant principal and Head of Department in running the RE department. There is a robust monitoring system in place for continuous review of spirituality provision. As a result the school has successfully developed itself in a very short period of time into a distinctive Islamic school. It was recognised as a Specialist Languages College with a Healthy School award. The school is one of four schools within the north-west and the only school within the Borough of Bolton to hold the Gold Award for Information Advice and Guidance (IAG). The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) awarded the school in 2012 an award in recognition of the school being in the top 10% nationally for outstanding students' progress in 2011. The school is proud of its achievements. Strategic development plans are in place which appropriately addressed the needs of RE. The leadership has a clear vision for the future of the school and about the economic well being of the students at the school. The school has established a *shura* (council) for learners, staff and parents where they can meet with the Principal and members of the senior leadership team for *mashwara* (consultation) on a range of issues including spirituality and its development. The governing body and all staff are committed to the school ethos and mission statement which is appropriately displayed around the school and reflected in the school's documentation. A system for daily briefing, weekly staff meetings, regular team meetings, lesson observations and staff training sessions is in place.

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