

BOLTON MUSLIM GIRLS SCHOOL

Inspection Report

Local authority: Bolton
Inspected under the auspices of: AMS UK
Inspection dates: 14 November 2017
Lead inspector: Yusuf Seedat

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	597
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Ayyub Youssouf
Headteacher	Idrish Patel
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2013
Address	Swan Lane Bolton BL3 3RL
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School website	www.bmgs.bmmat.org

Introduction

Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Yusuf Seedat
Team Inspectors: Mona Mohamed and Mohammad Asad

This inspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors. They visited lessons or parts of lessons including observing Guidance and Support Time, *Salah*, break time and lunch time. They held meetings with the senior leadership team, staff, parents, one of the experienced governor and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupil's written work, planning of the RE (Religious Education) and PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship Education) curriculum, various school self-evaluation documents, the schools' RE Development Plan and parent questionnaires. In accordance with the protocol that exists between DFE and AMS UK (Section 48), the lead inspector reviewed the school's last Ofsted inspection report.

The inspection team looked at the following in detail:

- The religious education (RE) curriculum
- The progress pupils make in RE
- The quality of teaching in RE
- Leadership and management for RE
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), including collective worship.

Information about the school

Bolton Muslim Girls School is a smaller than average secondary school. All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the majority being of Indian and Pakistani heritage, and most speak English as an additional language. The school became an Academy in September 2016 following a converter model. It is part of the Bolton Muslim Academy Trust. The school is amongst the top five per cent of schools in terms of Progress 8, and in the DfE's recently published GCSE provisional performance table for 2017, indicates that Bolton Muslim Girls' School is the borough's top performing school.

Inspection judgments

Overall effectiveness	1
The achievement of pupils in their religious education.	1
The quality of teaching and learning.	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of religious Education, including the role of the school's governing body in RE.	1
The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the daily act of collective worship.	1

Overall effectiveness: the quality of religious education provided at Bolton Muslim Girls School is outstanding because:

The school's practice consistently reflects the highest expectations of staff and the highest aspirations for pupils; hence the attainment and progress for Religious Education is consistently outstanding with 50% of learners achieving five or more levels of progress at GCSE.

As part of the schools' recently reviewed mission statement, the school aims to.... 'To work together in a supportive, secure and pleasant learning environment that promotes high standards for all, a love and ownership of learning; spiritual growth, best standards of conduct founded on Islamic morals and British values and prepares learners for their role as caring and contributing *Muslimahs* in modern Britain'. The school is extremely successful in meeting its aim. Pupils demonstrate excellent learning qualities and are receptive, alert, articulate and motivated to thrive.

Leadership at all levels in religious education has a clear vision for the department which is led very effectively and work excellently as a team, with an embedded culture of sharing ideas and practices, which ensures consistency across the department such that they continually strive in maintaining high standards.

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. All pupils fully understand, subscribe to actively promote the mission of the school and work well with teachers. They thrive as a result of the outstanding teaching of Religious Education (RE), enjoy their lessons, and make exceptional progress. The highly effective teaching in RE together with the outstanding provision of the broader curriculum including PSHCE, with a wide range of extracurricular activities, contributes enormously to the spiritual and moral social and cultural development of the pupils. This is a significant strength of the school.

Lessons are planned in detail and shared with the colleagues teaching it. This enables there to be consistency across the department. Lessons have clear objectives, with

references to the Qur'an and Hadiths throughout. Learners are encouraged to consider their personal viewpoint alongside the religious teachings. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are embedded in the lesson plans to enable learners to engage fully.

Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place demonstrating that safeguarding the welfare of the pupils is of utmost concern and Fundamental British Values are promoted effectively throughout the curriculum, assemblies and displays. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of these values.

Prayer and collective worship are intrinsic to the daily life of the school. There is a well-structured programme, and in winter pupils take responsibilities, with supervision from staff in praying Zuhr salaah, with reverence in the classrooms. The school, due to lack of space, do not have a designated place of worship, where all pupils can pray. The SLT have plans in the eminent future to make available such a provision.

What needs improvement?

- Implement the provision which the SLT has planned for a designated place of worship (salaah)
- Further enhance SMSC by planning for pupils to have more opportunities to interact with the wider communities.

The achievement of pupils at the school in their religious education is outstanding because:

Standards of achievement in Religious Education are significantly high. There is effective analysis and monitoring of academic performance with positive intervention strategies. Skills are developed and embedded into schemes of work alongside content. At GCSE, learners are taught how to achieve full marks in answers, and make rapid and sustained progress towards this. The department regularly assesses learners and maintains a database to monitor the progress towards their target. At KS3 the curriculum has been adapted in line with the new GCSE specification to enable learners in Y7 and 8 begin to gain an understanding of the reading, writing and communication skill requirements of GCSE. Literacy tasks and homework enable learners to develop their RS vocabulary as well as consolidate learning.

Teaching is strongly supported by assessment systems which ensure that all pupils' progress is carefully monitored and swift action is taken when it is identified that extra support is needed.

Hence the standard pupils achieve at GCSE RE are consistently significantly above average. The evidence provided indicates a sustained level of high achievement in terms of pupil progress and achievement at each key stage. Religious Studies GCSE results are consistently outstanding. The average grade for 2017 was A, 2016 and 2015 the average grade was A-. Not only are outstanding grades being achieved at GCSE, but also over 50% of learners achieve 5+ levels of progress each year.

Pupils are articulate and think independently and relish discussing their ideas in lessons. Pupils' ability to think, to be creative and original is seen in a variety of formats including their written work which is well organised and neatly presented. Pupils show high levels of knowledge and understanding. They are mature and frequently demonstrate initiative. For example, when responding to written feedback.

The quality of teaching and assessment in the school is outstanding because:

All teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils. Their subject knowledge is excellent and they plan and teach lessons that enable pupils to learn exceptionally well across the curriculum. It is highly effective in enabling pupils to develop their skills and further their knowledge and understanding. All lesson seen by inspectors were lively and challenging.

Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with notable impact on the quality of learning.

Pupils are highly motivated, sustain concentration and enjoy learning. Marking and dialogue between pupils and staff are of consistently high quality which promote excellence in learning and progress. Well-paced and stimulating teaching is successful in producing an enthusiastic response in lessons. Pupils thrive on opportunities for think for themselves and engage in discussion, where they display confidence and poise.

Teachers impart their passion for their subject onto the pupils engendering enthusiasm interest and curiosity and enjoyment. For example, during an outstanding Year 9 lesson which addressed the belief in Akhirah, where lively discussions amongst pupils were on initiated through the statement displayed on the board, 'You only live once' all pupils had an opportunity to share their thoughts, various scenarios were discussed. Pupils were challenged with excellent and probing questions leading all pupils to develop a deep understanding of their faith and in their spirituality.

The pupils gain a clear understanding of the beliefs and traditions of Islam and other religions while also engaging with the broader spiritual, moral, cultural and social issues of contemporary society. This is all underpinned by the many opportunities that exist beyond the classroom for pupils to be engaged with local, national and international charities, and engagement as Prefects and Form Shura reps.

Resources are imaginative and varied and teachers use ICT and IWB effectively to promote learning and to make lessons more accessible and lively.

Work is marked frequently and thorough and constructive feedback with next steps for improvement given. Teachers make sure pupils respond to the advice given for the improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of Religious Education is outstanding because:

The pursuit of excellence in all of the school's RE educational activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising and highly successful drive to strongly improve, or maintain, the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils over a sustained period of time.

The Schools Leaders have recently reviewed, focused, and shared ownership with all stakeholders including parents and pupils, their vision, values and mission statement. This has been pivotal in their reviewed values of Faith, Respect, Honesty, Good manners, Tolerance, Resilience, Kindness and Aspirations are being embedded throughout the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The leadership team ensures that the monitoring and evaluation of the department is very effective. Quality assurance of teaching and learning is completed through book sampling, learning walks and pupil voice surveys. There is robust self-evaluation. The leader works with the members of the department in making improvements, and developing subject knowledge through CPD. Performance management has demonstrated that all members of the RS team are outstanding practitioners. Classroom observations are regular, accurate and well documented. Prayer and reflection are an integral part of the form and assembly provision and are subject to informal monitoring by the senior managers and pastoral leaders.

Governors are highly experienced and very committed to their roles. They play a key strategic part on the 'Local Governors Board' which is part of the Bolton Muslim Academy Trust. Governors ensure there are appropriate systems in place to monitor and support its' provision and ensure the safeguarding of pupils.

The headteacher, S.L.T, and the head of RE are all excellent role models. They foster good relations within their own teams and are all committed to providing a first-class education for all in their care.

BMGS has a well-established CPD programme that runs every Wednesday from 2:30-4pm. Staff are trained in whole school issues, along with topics specifically for Middle Leaders or Learning Coordinators. Already this academic year all staff have received training on Resilience and Bereavement. Future training is planned on 'Supporting learners with anxiety', 'Understanding and supporting learners who self-harm', 'Managing cyberbullying and sexting', and 'Emotion coaching to build resilience'.

The leader of Spirituality and Ethos is also the leader of pastoral care. Weekly PSHCE lessons are in place. Learning Co-ordinators deliver the content, but the pastoral team have worked hard to produce the resources and PowerPoints for the lessons. This enables each learner in each year group to have the same learning experience. Many of the PSHCE topics are preparing learners for life in modern Britain. The British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and those without faith are embedded into lessons being taught. Also as a faith school, learners reflect on Islamic teachings, and the Muslim way of life.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural reflection points can be found across the curriculum. Hadiths and Qur'anic quotes are drawn upon and often used as the starter for a lesson, or to lead into a curriculum topic. Lessons begin with a prayer to enable the learners to prepare spiritually for learning and end with a prayer to enable learners to reflect spiritually on what has been learnt.

What needs improvement?

- Implement the provision which the SLT has planned for a designated place of worship (salaat)

The extent to which the religious education curriculum is outstanding because:

The RE curriculum is broad and balanced and encompasses all the major faiths. The school had adopted the Bolton SACRE's scheme of work. It provides pupils with a range of Islamic disciplines including, knowledge and understanding of Tawheed (oneness of Allah), fiqh (theology) and Seerah (life of some prophets and the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) as well as learning about religions other than their own.

Through the RS and wider curriculum, pupils develop their understanding and respect for cultural diversity within Islam, Christianity and other beliefs. Pupils have a strong sense of identity through a secure understanding of their own faith, which promotes tolerance, and respect of different cultures.

In the newly introduced PSHCE curriculum, all lessons include both Islamic beliefs and British Values reflection point. Pupils are being prepared for life in 21st century Britain whilst upholding their distinctive Muslim beliefs and practices. For example, they learn about voting and democracy, discrimination, rights and responsibilities, diversity and tolerance and respect.

The daily act of collective worship, Salah (prayers), the RS and PSHCE curriculum contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

The RS curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to focus on their spiritual development through collapsed timetable days, Qur'anic recitation at the beginning of every lesson and Surah Kahf on Friday, and key themes such as the five pillars, modesty and purification of the self. These opportunities deepen pupils' understanding and practice of Islam.

The carefully selected and planned Hadeeth (reflection) of the week promotes universal human values and good character, applicable to all faiths and none. During a conversation with pupils, they were able to confidently explore their thoughts and feeling about the Hadeeth of the Week, which during the inspection, encouraged pupils to smile as it considered being a charity.

The RS GCSE course begins in Year 9. The study of religions focusses on Beliefs and Teachings, Practices, Sources of Wisdom and Authority and Forms of expression and ways of life. For example, one of the exam papers focuses on the Qur'an, Beliefs and teachings of Islam, and Lives of the prophets and others.

The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because:

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school work. It guides the college ethos, systems and policies with opportunities for spiritual development embedded across the whole day and curriculum. It is underpinned by the high quality of Religious Studies and the impact of the clear guidance pupils receive from staff on spiritual matters.

In a discussion with the inspectors, pupils said that they enjoy and learn a lot from the daily collective acts of worship. A pupil said that prayer made her a much calmer person and made her think that Allah is always with her'. All pupils read or listen to recitation of Surah Al-Kahf every Friday.

All lessons observed begin with a prayer to enable the pupils to prepare spiritually for learning and ended with a prayer to enable them to reflect spiritually on what has been learnt.

The organisation of salaah ensures that it is a peaceful and reflective time for the whole school with all pupils and staff are fully engaged during the collective worship. Although it takes place in the individual form rooms, pupils participate with humility and concentration. This is overseen by form tutors who strongly support the spiritual development of pupils, even when they are not from the same faith of the pupils. Before the start of prayers, all pupils are provided with a d'ua (supplications) book to help them engage in regular and meaningful remembrance of Allah, dhikr.

Pupils' social development is excellent. They thoroughly enjoy learning about their faith and reflect confidently on their experiences, which helps to inform their perspective on life. Pupils have played an active role in fundraising for various charities over the last two years demonstrating pupils' clear empathy for those in need. They raised over £5,000 for Syria Water Aid, Fair trade, Macmillan Cancer Research and many others.

In a conversation with inspectors, pupils said that raising fund for good causes make them happy because Allah is happy, make them grateful for what they have and feel good and proud of themselves for being able to do good deeds as Muslims.

Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. Their behaviour is exemplary, and they have a mature sense of right and wrong. For example, pupils have been keen to take up leadership opportunities to raise awareness of various causes for example, Anti bullying and RS, prefects and members of the School Council.

Pupils' moral and ethical views are developed across the curriculum through discussion, particularly in RS and PSHCE, they discuss human rights and moral issues openly and strongly. The Hadeeth of the Week encourages pupils to be reflective of their actions and recognise the difference between right and wrong.

National safeguarding events such as Anti Bullying week is embedded securely into school life and students speak with confidence about these areas. For example, Year 8 planned to deliver an assembly this week on anti-bullying.

Pupils' cultural development is developed through some opportunities in meeting with people from different faiths and cultures backgrounds to them outside the school. They appreciate cultural diversity, and are confident and enthusiastic in their own religious observance.

The school arranged a wide variety of trips and visits across year groups, which further enhance pupils' opportunities to interact with people from different backgrounds. For example, during the inspection, Year 8 went on a faith trail visits where they visited a Church, a Mosque and a Mandir. They said to the inspector that they enjoy interacting with people of different faiths and cultures to them, although, a few parents and pupils desire to have more interaction with pupils of different faiths.

Pupils develop respect for the rights of others to hold views different to their own. Pupils participate in sporting events with other local faith and non-faith schools, for example, they participated in the AMS Annual Interfaith Games last year.

What needs improvement?

- Further enhance SMSC by planning for pupils to have more opportunities to interact with the wider communities.

Glossary

What inspection judgments mean

Grade	Judgment	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. AMSUK inspectors will make further visits until it improves.