

EDEN BOYS' SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM

Inspection Report

Local authority: Birmingham

Inspected under the auspices of: AMS UK

Inspection dates: 5 March 2018

Lead inspector: Mrs Hasina Varachia

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Free School
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	374
Appropriate authority	Tauheedul Education Trust
Chair	Abdul Rahim
Headteacher	Asiyah Ravat
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Mrs. Hasina Varachia
Team Inspectors: Mrs. Mona Mohamed
Mr. Yusuf Seedat
Mr. Mohammad Asad

This inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors. They visited lessons or parts of lessons including observing form time, break time and lunch time. They held meetings with governors, the senior leadership team, staff, parents 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 PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education) curriculum, various school self-evaluation documents, the schools' Faith and Character Education Plan and parent questionnaires. The school has yet to receive a Section 5 inspection.

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

Eden Boys' School, Birmingham is an Islamic faith school which opened as a new free school in September 2015. It is one of 18 schools within the Tauheedul Education Trust. The school opened because of the community's demand for a new and high-achieving school for boys from a Muslim background.

The school opened with 150 pupils, 100 in Year 7 and 50 in Year 8. Since September 2015, approximately 100 pupils have entered Year 7. With 374 pupils, the school is currently much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. In response to local demand, from September 2017 onwards the school increased to 120 pupils per year group. The school is currently oversubscribed with four applications for every place offered. When full to capacity, the school expects to have 700 on roll. This will include the sixth form, which the school plans to open with 200 students in September 2019.

The school is an Islamic faith school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The vast majority of pupils are from Asian heritage, and almost all are speakers of English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. No pupils currently on roll attend an alternative provision. The school's specialism is leadership, the main field of interest in all schools within the Tauheedul Education Trust.

The Tauheedul Education Trust is the main governing body with legal responsibility for all schools within the trust. The local governing body focuses on the day-to-day responsibilities of the school. The first cohort of Year 7 pupils, now in Year 10, will take the first public examinations during the current summer term, 2018, in Computer Science and French. This group of pupils will enter Year 11 in September and will take a range of GCSE examinations in the summer term of 2019.

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 Eden Boys' School Birmingham is outstanding because:

Pupils' achievements and attitudes are excellent throughout the school. This fulfils the school's ambitious aims for each pupil to achieve academic excellence, character development and service to communities. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills both in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Pupils' academic achievements are excellent and on course to be well above the national average at GCSE.

Pupils are willing learners, prepared to engage in lessons and work hard. They are ambitious and self-aware and collaborate in groups and pairs especially well. They know what they need to do to improve. The excellent programme of enrichment activities offers an expanding range of activities. Pupils enjoy and value them, using them to excellent advantage.

Very good teaching demonstrates thorough subject knowledge, skills in organisation, time management and use of resources, as well as a thorough knowledge of each pupils' needs.

The school carefully analyses the needs of pupils and offers them individual support to ensure their needs are met.

Thorough communication between home and the school demonstrates the excellent care and interest shown by the staff. Pupils' views are routinely sought.

The school is highly successful in its promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development within a strong Islamic environment. Pupils are given extensive opportunities to grow as confident and harmonious citizens with a strong sense of self, and respect for each other. Their moral and social awareness is remarkable. The pupils develop self-confidence and resilience within a culture of care and consideration for others. They are reflective, self-aware and responsive to the many spiritual experiences on offer. Pupils show deep respect and sensitivity towards the

diverse cultural and religious backgrounds present in British society. Pupils are extremely proud of their school.

The school's excellent pastoral system ensures pupils are particularly well cared for. This is supported by excellent welfare, health and safety procedures that uphold the well-being of pupils.

RE, collective worship and the curriculum are informed by Islamic values which contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. School displays are of an excellent standard.

Pupils report that they feel very safe in school and incidences of bullying are extremely rare.

Attendance is given exceptionally high priority and as a result, attendance for the last two years has been the highest in the country.

The RE curriculum is well planned, reflecting rich, exciting and invaluable opportunities for pupils to develop as British citizens. Relationships with other schools, local faith groups and the wider community are strong.

Pupils recognise a moral responsibility to help those in need and have raised substantial funds for a variety of local, national and international charities. As a result, pupils learn exceptionally well from these opportunities with one parent sharing with inspectors the positive impact the schools' work on charity has had on her son, *'Recently my son helped his dad with clearing the snow for neighbours.'*

Pupils fully embrace Fundamental British Values. They are effectively promoted throughout the curriculum, assemblies and displays. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of these values.

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

Pupils participate fully in lessons. This is supported by very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils focus on their learning and take pride in the presentation and organisation of their work. They are skilled at identifying gaps in their knowledge and readily seek clarification from their teachers where necessary. They show initiative and a strong capacity for independent learning, and they collaborate well when working in pairs and groups. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and show great care and support for their peers, reflecting the strong values of the school.

Leaders have taken excellent steps to ensure the needs of the most able pupils to achieve their potential are met. As a result of very close scrutiny of the curriculum and close monitoring of planning, activities and strategies are devised to stretch and challenge in all lessons. Pupils with SEND are equally well supported both in and out of lessons and as a result, all pupils make excellent progress.

Predicted GCSE RE results show that pupils are on course to achieve exceptionally well and exceed national figures. An exceptional 100% are expected to achieve 9-4 grades at GCSE.

Teaching is strongly supported by excellent 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.

The main library has an adequate number of Islamic reading and RE books for use.

Parents are kept very informed of their son's progress through half termly reports throughout the year as well as through twice yearly parents' evenings.

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

In most lessons observed, teaching was characterised by clear expectations, strong subject knowledge, and lively and enthusiastic presentation. Lessons were well planned, used a range of resources effectively, and encouraged and supported independent learning. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and include a variety of tasks that holds the pupils' interests and challenges their thinking. Teachers ensure that pupils participate well in class, engaging them in dialogue to test out their ideas.

A particular strong feature found in most lessons observed is the mutual respect and strong rapport between pupils, and between pupils and their teachers. This gives the boys the confidence to ask questions and produces an atmosphere highly conducive to study, which fosters high achievement. Most teaching uses skillful questioning sequentially to tease out pupils' knowledge and encourages them to make links to previous learning and to other subjects. This enables pupils, especially the most able, to achieve very high standards. A good example of this was seen in a lesson about predestination, where pupils grasped newly acquired knowledge and applied it very securely. In this lesson, excellent links were made to Islam, deepening pupils' spirituality.

Teachers are enthusiastic and committed, with boys' learning also supported by the teaching of additional lessons which either resolve any areas of difficulty or provide the opportunity for pupils to further deepen and extend their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils also praise the quality of teaching. They enjoy the lessons and say, *'The teachers make lessons exciting and this makes lessons interesting and enjoyable.'*

Teachers reinforce positive learning attitudes through the widespread use of the school's behaviour policy. This seeks to make pupils reflective, responsible, resourceful, resilient and reasoning.

The marking of written work is regular and contains constructive, evaluative and encouraging comments. Most pupils respond well to these comments ensuring they move on in their learning.

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

Leaders and governors are highly successful in promoting the aims and Islamic ethos of the school. The Islamic ethos is firmly embedded in school life, supported very well by tailored professional development. The curriculum is reviewed by senior leaders to ensure it provides breadth and balance whilst meeting the needs of all pupils. The wider curriculum including the form time and extra-curricular activities have a thoroughly positive impact on the personal development of pupils ensuring they are ready to fulfil their future aspirations.

The RE curriculum provides numerous opportunities for high quality learning experiences and pupils are thoroughly engaged in their learning as a result.

The head teacher, assistant vice principal, Faith and Character lead, other leaders and staff together support the schools' Islamic values which enhance the educational experiences of all pupils resulting in a strong impact upon standards.

The strength of pupils' educational experiences and the quality of care provided is testimony to the leadership and management of the school. Practices and policies are well established, with a particular emphasis on the welfare and safeguarding of pupils.

The leadership team ensures that the school is a harmonious community where staff, parents and pupils work well together. Parents and pupils confirm this view. They articulate a clear vision for the schools' development, demonstrating a commitment towards ensuring that the pastoral and academic experiences of each pupil are positive.

Processes of self-evaluation are reflective and development planning have been extremely effective. The systems in place have significant influence on moving the school forward. The leadership team strives to improve the quality of pupils' learning at all levels. They are not afraid to tackle underperformance and as a result, future plans are focused, ensuring that all staff are well trained to carry out their role effectively.

The school is successful in securing, supporting and developing high quality staff. Training takes place regularly. The school recognises teachers who need bespoke support and have in place a good programme of mentoring to ensure that the schools' high standards of teaching continue to be met.

The school keeps accurate data of pupils' progress in a range of initiatives across the school and can show strong impact in recent programmes. Leaders carefully monitor pupils who are falling behind and evaluate routinely how effective additional intervention support has on filling gaps in learning. As a result, pupils make excellent progress.

Parents express their overwhelming appreciation of the open and welcoming atmosphere in the school. Parents confirm they are impressed with the way the school addresses parental concerns and the opportunities to be actively involved in the work of the school. All parents spoken to by inspectors would recommend the school to other parents.

The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs is outstanding because:

The school effectively embeds the distinctive spiritual ethos through which the curriculum, both formal and informal, provides memorable experiences, rich opportunities for high quality learning, wider personal development and well-being.

RE and PSHE form part of the school's core Key Stage 3 offer. Both are well planned with a range of varied activities and opportunities to broaden pupil's knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultures, religions, values and histories that make up modern British society. At Key Stage 4, pupils study GCSE RE and Citizenship.

This is extremely well supported by the excellent Faith Character Development programme through *hadith* of the week, Islamic circles, spirituality days, assemblies and the school's Service to Communities programme. The programme is designed to help pupils develop a sense of civic responsibility, an understanding of the potential of voluntary activity and an appreciation of how they can use their individual skills and talents to benefit the world around them.

The Faith and Character Education programme instils a culture that effectively promotes the teachings of the Islamic faith and in particular emphasis on self-discipline, compassion, mutual respect for all people regardless of difference and respect for the earth itself. Through their leadership specialism, community service projects, and interfaith alliances, the pupils meet inspirational people from a diverse spectrum of backgrounds, beliefs and cultures, and are encouraged to embrace all that life in modern Britain has to offer.

The school has a dedicated ablution area and reflection hall which is used by students and staff for prayers. During the inspection, a small minority of pupils were seen performing *Zuhr Salah* (*noon prayer*) in congregational during lunchtime. Inspectors agree that it would be advisable for the school to allocate a specific time for *Salah* for the whole school during the lunchtime break. This would encourage more pupils to participate in *Salah*.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision for daily *Salah* by dedicating a specific time in the timetable for the whole school to pray throughout the year.

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

The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integral to the work of the school. It guides the school ethos, systems and policies with opportunities for spiritual development embedded across the whole day and curriculum.

Individuals demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and are kind and considerate to each other. They are confident in their own abilities, articulate about their pride in belonging to the school community, and express themselves enthusiastically about the opportunities they have and what they have gained from the school. Their evident self-esteem builds as they move throughout the school, growing in confidence and maturity.

Pupils gain an excellent understanding of their own and others' faiths through the numerous opportunities the school provides both in and out of school. Pupils take advantage of these opportunities to grow in self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through many aspects of the schools' work, from participating in school productions, being in a team or serving as a member of the Student Shura (School Council).

The nurturing and development of pupils' own faith and culture is a strength in the school. It is promoted well through the faith enrichment activities, such as, the recitation of *Surah al-Fatihah* (the opening chapter of the Qur'an) at the start of the lesson, *dua* (supplications) at end of each lesson, *Hadith* of the Week (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), interfaith *Iftaar* (breaking of the fast) during Ramadan, which brings together members of the school and wider community, and the recitation of *Surah Al-Kahf* (The Cave) every Friday. Pupils all agree that these opportunities help them to grow in faith.

Pupils of different faith of the school said to inspectors that they feel valued members of the school community and they are given every opportunity to practice their own faith peacefully.

Pupils display excellent moral understanding. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and demonstrate readiness to follow the rules to guide their behaviour. Pupils move about sensibly and listen respectfully to their teachers and their peer. Pupils understand the need for rewards and sanctions and are aware that their choices about behaviour have consequences. Pupils enjoy the rewards that their hard work brings. Pupils are heavily involved in the extensive fundraising activities of the school. Charities supported have included, the Royal British Legion, Dementia UK and the Macmillan Cancer appeal.

Measures to guard against bullying are highly effective, supported by procedures to deal appropriately with rare incidents. Pupils believe any bullying is taken seriously and dealt with quickly.

In accordance with its aims to develop the whole person, the schools' pastoral system is extremely successful in supporting pupils. Pupils receive guidance that helps them to maximise their personal strengths and valuable careers advice. The pupils are well known to the staff who give them considerable time and individual attention. The well-being of the boys is actively and thoroughly monitored and communicated to parents and others, with any concerns followed up effectively and thoroughly.

Pupils' excellent social development is clearly evident in the ease with which they talk to adults and that their behaviour is at all times respectful and courteous. Older pupils are excellent role models to younger pupils through their behaviour and attitudes, and through the way in which they discharge more formal responsibilities as prefects, peer mentors, head boy, *Shura* members, or in addressing assemblies. A substantial number of pupils do community service through the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Pupils' cultural awareness is developed through their learning across the curriculum and activities relating to special events. They have many opportunities to develop their social skills in different contexts and with a diverse range of people in and outside the school, as seen with the schools' participation in interfaith forums and working with the FEAST, an organisation which provides a forum for pupils to discuss matters of religious and social relevance.

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. AMS UK inspectors will make further visits until it improves.