

Religious School

Inspection Report

Local authority:	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspected under the auspices of:	AMS-UK
Inspection dates:	11th January 2024
Lead inspector:	Yusuf Seedat

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

Type of school:	Secondary and 6 th Form College
School category:	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Girls
Number on roll:	862
Appropriate authority:	Board of Trustees
Chair:	Sir Mufti Hamid Patel
Headteacher:	Mrs. Shahnaz Akhtar (Principal)

Date of previous school inspection: June 2015

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Introduction

Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Yusuf M Seedat

Team Inspector: Mohammad Asad

This inspection was carried out by 2 inspectors. They visited 7 lessons or parts of lessons including (collective prayers session and assembly). They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of children. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including children's written work, teachers' lesson plans, the RE (Islamic Studies) curriculum, the school's self-evaluation documents and the school's Islamic Studies development plan. In accordance with the protocol that exists between DFE and AMSUK (Section 48), the lead inspector reviewed the school's recent Ofsted inspection report, which took place on 11 and 12 October 2022.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

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

Information about the school

Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School (TIGHS) was created in response to demands from the community and is the founding school of Star Academies Trust – one of the UK's leading education providers. Star Academies is a mixed Multi-Academy Trust that runs a diverse network of primary and secondary schools. They are a values-based organisation, committed to enhancing social mobility. Star Academies and in particular the school's unwavering commitment to raising the aspirations of children and young people in socially and economically deprived areas is evident through a comprehensive range of initiatives. These efforts aim to develop leadership skills, improve life chances and foster success in education, employment, and the professions.

Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School and Sixth Form College in Blackburn is an 11-18 girls' secondary school, which includes a 200 place sixth form. Like all Star schools, it has "Leadership" as a specialism.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that 35% of pupils live within the top 30% deprived areas of UK and 69% of all pupils speak English as an additional language.

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 Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School and 6th Form College is Outstanding because:

The embodiment of TIGHS' mission statement, with its distinctive faith ethos, is evident in every facet of the school's operation. The commitment to fostering a culture of educational excellence resonates throughout the institution, creating a nurturing and secure Islamic environment for all stakeholders. The core values of discipline, mutual care, and respect are not just words but actively embedded into the fabric of daily school life.

Incorporation of the Faithful Stars Framework which all Star Academies with a faith ethos adopt and stands as the cornerstone of the school's approach to education and student development. It serves as the compass guiding all endeavours, ensuring that every initiative and decision aligns with the core values and objectives. This comprehensive framework permeates every aspect of school life, from curriculum design to extracurricular activities, promoting a cohesive and purpose-driven educational experience.

The mission statement serves as a guiding principle, driving the pursuit of educational excellence. This commitment transcends traditional academic achievements, extending into the cultivation of character, values, and a sense of responsibility towards the wider community. The integration of Islamic principles and values into the educational framework is both seamless and impactful, fostering an environment conducive to holistic growth and learning. The teaching standard within the Religious Education curriculum at TIGHS is undeniably exceptional. This excellence, combined with a meticulously crafted and pertinent RE curriculum, is the bedrock for outstanding learning outcomes and achievements. Notably, the exceptional achievements observed in many instances represent substantial progress and improvement, reflecting the efficacy of the teaching methodologies employed. The educational experiences provided to pupils at TIGHS are exemplary, ensuring that all students, including specific groups, are exceptionally prepared for their future educational, vocational, or professional endeavours. This dedication to tailored education demonstrates an unwavering commitment to ensuring that every pupil is well-equipped for their next stage of development.

The school exhibits outstanding practice in nurturing high levels of literacy in Islamic education among its pupils, which align seamlessly with their age-appropriate learning milestones. This

commitment to fostering literacy in Islamic education reflects the school's dedication to holistic education and cultural understanding.

The school's practices consistently uphold the highest expectations for both staff and pupils, irrespective of individual circumstances. This inclusive approach extends its aspirations to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, ensuring that each individual is supported and challenged to achieve their utmost potential.

Dissemination of Best Practice for Continuous Improvement: Best practices are not only embraced but effectively disseminated throughout the institution, driving a continuous cycle of improvement. This commitment to sharing excellence fosters a culture of collective ambition, fuelling ongoing enhancement across all facets of school life.

Quality of Collective Worship and Holistic Development. Principal aspects of the school's work, including the quality of collective worship (salat), are consistently rated as good or outstanding. Furthermore, the comprehensive promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development cultivates a nurturing and highly cohesive learning community. This thoughtful approach enables pupils to thrive in an environment that supports their holistic growth and development.

In conclusion, the implementation of TIGHS' mission statement and the integration of the Faithful Stars Framework represent a holistic and deeply impactful approach to education. The seamless alignment of these principles with every aspect of school life has not only contributed to academic success but, more importantly, has played a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded, morally upright individuals who positively contribute to the wider community.

The Religious Education provision at TIGHS exemplifies outstanding practice across multiple dimensions, epitomizing a commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and a continual pursuit of improvement. The school's unwavering dedication to holistic development ensures that pupils thrive academically, culturally, and spiritually, laying a robust foundation for their future pursuits.

Achievement of pupils at the school in their Religious Education is Outstanding because:

The school has a structured curriculum and staff training which are clear and well-structured RE schemata with defined knowledge components. Comprehensive curriculum-related training is provided for all staff, enhancing subject-specific pedagogy.

The school implements an enhanced program involving training sessions, lesson visits, and coaching to further enhance teaching quality.

TIGHS' implements a comprehensive catch-up program which ensures students achieve their potential in public examinations, contributing to overall performance enhancement.

As a result, pupils demonstrate rapid and sustained progress across the RE curriculum. They display advanced skills in reading, writing, verbal communication, and comprehension, preparing them exceptionally well for future education or employment. Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and exhibit rapid understanding across subjects covered in the RE curriculum.

The quality of work and progress of diverse groups, including those with disabilities, special educational needs, and pupil premium support, showcases exceptional attainment levels, often surpassing their potential.

Evidence from external examination results and reading comprehension in RE (Islamic studies) demonstrates high attainment levels among almost all pupil groups.

The results below demonstrate that.

GCSE Results:

Grades 9-8: Maintaining a steady percentage, despite a slight decrease in 2022-2023.

Grades 9-7: Consistently high, signifying sustained achievement.

Grades 9-5 and 9-4%: Demonstrating outstanding attainment levels.

A Level Results:

- Grades A*-A: A substantial increase from 36% to 63% between 2018-2019 and 2022-2023.
- Grades A*-B: Significantly improved and consistently high.
- Grades A*-C: Remains at a consistent 100%, indicating exceptional performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Sustaining Exceptional Outcomes: A focus on sustaining outstanding outcomes even during temporary teacher absences.

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

The self-evaluation rightly identifies teaching in RE as exceptional. Lesson visits consistently demonstrate a student-focused, engaging, and challenging approach. The pace and structure of lessons are highly effective, fostering high levels of progress.

Pupils exhibit a commendable commitment to and enjoyment of RE lessons. This positive attitude contributes to a thriving learning environment.

Regular assessments, conducted at least once after each unit and formally each term, reflect excellent progress. These assessments are instrumental in identifying and addressing learning gaps, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing improvement.

Pupils' behaviour in RE lessons is exceptional, creating an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

The school's rigorous quality assurance processes with the support of Star Academies and with the support of experienced professionals, integrated into the annual calendar, uphold a zero-tolerance policy for complacency. This culture ensures continuous improvement across all departments, including Religious Studies (RS) and the Quality Assurance processes support and challenge every staff member, fostering a culture where professional development is a priority.

The quality of education is regularly monitored through lesson visits and work scrutiny, providing valuable insights into teaching effectiveness.

A comprehensive timetable of quality assurance covers long, medium, and short-term planning, coupled with thorough data analysis, ensuring a holistic evaluation of teaching standards.

Teaching Profile: The school maintains a Teaching Profile that consolidates judgements from various assessments. This tool is instrumental in monitoring individual teachers' performance across all subjects.

Support Mechanisms which are in place like the implementation of instructional coaching demonstrates the school's commitment to continuous improvement, providing targeted support for teachers to enhance their instructional skills.

There is rigorous support and interventions are in place for both students and teachers requiring additional assistance, emphasising the school's dedication to improving pupil outcomes.

Conclusion:

The school's self-evaluation reveals an outstanding quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education. The meticulous quality assurance processes, coupled with a commitment to professional development, contribute to a culture of excellence that permeates through every aspect of the school. The Teaching Profile demonstrates consistently good or better teaching standards across RS and Citizenship, affirming the school's commitment to providing an exceptional education experience for its students.

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

The leaders, including the governing body, under the supervision of Star Academies Trust exhibit a strong commitment to delivering a world-class Religious Education provision aligned with the values and faith commitment of the school community.

The leadership team and governance structure are highly qualified, knowledgeable, and dedicated to instilling a sense of purpose and commitment to the school's Faithful Stars Education (FSE) ethos.

The school has successfully developed a robust faith-based ethos emphasizing good character, serving others, and nurturing responsible British citizens. Staff expertise in faith issues contributes significantly to this ethos.

The Trust and governors play a pivotal role in holding the school accountable and are equipped with necessary skills through a comprehensive induction and ongoing training program. They actively monitor, evaluate, and communicate the school's faith ethos and priorities.

TIGHS' safeguarding measures, recognised as outstanding, ensure a safe environment for pupils. Rigorous training and comprehensive policies demonstrate a commitment to pupils' welfare.

The school provides rigorous and ongoing professional development for teachers, promoting high standards in teaching and learning across the RE curriculum.

Pupils make rapid and sustained progress across the RE curriculum, demonstrating high levels of reading, writing, comprehension, and application of skills, ensuring readiness for future education or employment. The Religious Studies curriculum encompasses major world faiths and the humanist tradition, allowing students to engage deeply with themes. The emphasis on Islamic faith, coupled with learning about other religions, enriches students' understanding.

Diverse and Inclusive Learning: Pupils from various backgrounds and needs achieve exceptionally well, with evidence indicating attainment above expectations, including those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Conclusion

The leadership, management, and governance of Religious Education at TIGHS showcase outstanding practices. The unwavering commitment to educational excellence, strong leadership, inclusive curriculum, exceptional pupil achievement, and robust safeguarding measures collectively contribute to the school's exceptional performance in delivering a high-quality RE provision. Continued focus on enhancing documentation of pupil progress and maintaining exemplary safeguarding measures will further fortify the already exceptional standards, ensuring sustained excellence and continuous improvement.

Further Enhancement can be made through detailed Progress Documentation: Further emphasis on documenting pupil progress and achievement across various RE subjects can strengthen evidence of exceptional pupil performance.

The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs is Outstanding because.

The school's faith provision follows the Star's Faith and Character Education Policy (FCE), and its framework is at the heart of the school's faith offer.

The Faith provision including collective worship, follows the Star Faithful Stars Education Policy and is both inclusive and comprehensive.

All pupils pray Zuhr and Asr at school in the winter months and have the opportunity to pray Zuhr in the summer months. In addition, the Assembly Programme is varied, inclusive, motivating, and relevant, with rich and well-planned content which celebrates how faith underpins everything that is done in school and supports the spiritual development of pupils, whilst also providing information to pupils about other world religions.

The RE lead in school has worked closely with the faith lead to create an innovative approach to the delivery of the SACRE scheme of work. The scheme has been reworked to put an emphasis on Islam so that, when studying other faiths, the pupils have a wealth of opportunities to discover similarities and differences with their own faith. They are taught about similarities and differences between religions through topics of study. For example, in a RE lesson observed, the teacher effectively engaged pupils in a stimulating discussion around the similarities and differences between Islam and Sikhism and how help is sought in times of difficulties.

Daily recital (in Arabic and English) of Surah al-Faatihah (Opening Chapter of the Holy Qur'an) at the start of lessons and the Kaffara al-Majlis (prayer) at the end of every lesson is observed. Islamic greetings are exchanged, and other expressions are used throughout school, both within and outside the classroom by staff, pupils and families.

Weekly activities include students taking part in interactive Hadeeth of the Week lessons during form time. This is an opportunity for them not only to understand the key message from the Hadeeth, but to also engage in, be tested upon and encouraged to put them into practice. In addition, on Fridays, students listen to a recitation of Surah Kahf, with translation in English, before leaving school for the weekend, which fosters a calm and reflective end to the school week. Student-led assemblies are delivered weekly.

Termly events include Spirituality Days and competitions. Themes for Spirituality Days have included life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Hajj and keeping healthy during Ramadhaan. For example, a recent Spirituality Day in December 2023 included activities around 'Manners in

Islam' and included workshops where pupils learnt importance of giving salaam, giving way to others, speaking politely, saying 'Jazak'Allah etc. through a range of creative activities including videos, artwork, comic strip and making prayer beads. These days are highly regarded by all pupils. Termly FSE competitions have included competitions in Art, Nasheed, and oracy. These competitions have encouraged students to learn about the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and the life of those who were close to him.

The school regularly celebrates the faith achievements of pupils in the school, for example, a few pupils who have completed the memorisation of the Qur'an have been recognised by the school.

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

The school's mission statement is firmly rooted in spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. Faith learning and personal development programmes make an outstanding contribution to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural development of the school community, including those of other faiths and none.

The school offers a wide range of extra and co-curricular activities, further enhancing the school ethos and supporting its mission statement. Leaders have a strong sense of moral purpose and pupils show high levels of respect for staff, visitors and each other. Pupils understand the concepts of right and wrong. This is reinforced through the STAR values.

They learn about, and respect, their own faith and other major faiths through Religious Studies lessons and projects undertaken with young people from other schools and backgrounds.

They undertake a range of interfaith activities – including interfaith trails, visits by speakers of different faiths and an annual interfaith conference. Students proudly spoke about their visits to the church, temple and mosque and how they observed similarities and differences in faith practices. A student said, '*We learn about our religion and the religion of others so that when we meet them, we can practice tolerance and compassion.*'

They explore their character development through 'Citizenship' lessons.

They participate in, and deliver, assemblies and 'Spirituality Days' regularly to develop their values and ethos.

Students develop reflection and introspectiveness through daily prayer, weekly Sunnah fasts and acts of worship and regular mentoring. They perform Zuhr salah (noon prayer) and Asar salah (afternoon prayer) at school during the winter months and Zuhr salah in the summer months. The organisation of salah ensures that it is a peaceful and reflective time for the

whole school community. The school planner also encourages students to set spiritual weekly targets.

They explore the concepts of right and wrong through assembly, Religious Studies lessons and Citizenship lessons and engage in debating moral and ethical issues with monthly debates.

Students are given extensive opportunities to focus on their spiritual development throughout the school day and throughout the year. Daily recital of Surah al-Fatihah (opening chapter of the Qur'an) and Kaffara al-Majlis dua (supplication) at the end of lessons is maturely observed.

The school has a wide array of enrichment opportunities that are regularly collated and recorded on personal development trackers which monitor offer and participation. After-school and lunchtime clubs offer students the opportunity to take part in various enrichment activities. These include the Music (Nasheed) Club, Spelling Bee Competition, CyberFirst Competition, Northern Lights Performance, Blackout Poetry, Poetry Flash Mob, Slam Poetry Competition, An Inspector Calls Theatre Production, UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge and a range of sporting activities.

In the Sixth Form, a range of enrichment opportunities are offered, along with ample opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. This includes taking part in the production of the I'tikaaf (reflection) circles in Ramadhan, delivering a termly student newsletter, the Duke of Edinburgh Award for students, Enterprise Day, and a social enterprise club 'Eco-Warriors', to implement eco-friendly changes to the school in line with the Global Development Goals and Big Sisters and Little Sisters (a peer support group initiative). Students proudly said, *'Leadership opportunities helps us to help others.'*

Students act to help those less fortunate than themselves and have well-developed views on a range of moral issues. They are encouraged to lead charitable projects. Last year, over £35,000 was raised for local and national charities. They spoke at length with great eloquence to inspectors about how it develops sympathy and empathy when they strive to assist others. One student said, *'I was really committed and dedicated in raising money because the purpose and mark I want to make in this world is that I want to help others.'*

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They feel it provides brilliant provisions and education which helps develop responsibility and maturity in their children and enables them to grow in faith. They say all staff are very approachable and they can raise any concerns with them.

They feel that the school does not only help their children, but it supports the families as well through times of difficulties.

Parents play an active part in the life of the school by helping to raise funds for the charitable projects the school are involved in and supporting their children to engage in activities offered by the school.

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. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.