

Gatton VA Primary School

Religious School Inspection Report

Local authority: Wandsworth
Inspected under the auspices of: AMS-UK
Inspection date: 21st February 2024
Lead Inspector: Yusuf Seedat

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

Type of school	Primary School
School category	Voluntary Aided School
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	628
Appropriate authority	Board of Governors
Chair	Mr Yunus Bobat
Headteacher	Mr Majid Ishaque
Date of previous school inspection	May 2015
Address:	Tooting Site -13e Broadwater Road, SW17 0DS Balham Site – (Year 2 only) 47A Balham High Road, SW12 9AW Entrance on Old Devonshire Road
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Yusuf M Seedat

Team Inspectors: Mohammad Asad
Munir Vali

This inspection was carried out by three inspectors. They visited twelve 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.

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

Gatton School in Tooting, London, proudly stands as the first purpose-built Muslim Voluntary Aided Primary School in the country. Committed to creating a nurturing and inclusive environment, the school features modern facilities, including comfortable classrooms, a swimming pool and a spacious sports hall. Year 2 children are accommodated at a second site in Balham.

Inclusivity and diversity are key aspects of Gatton's ethos, welcoming children from various cultures and backgrounds, with families representing over 25 languages. Collaborative stakeholder engagement involves staff, parents, pupils and governors working together to ensure the success of every student, with a dedication to securing the very best outcomes.

The school actively collaborates with local schools and organizations, including the Al Risalah Trust family of schools, Orchard Primary School in Lambeth, Al Risalah Secondary Girls and Boys School in Wandsworth, and Al Risalah Nursery in Wandsworth.

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 Gatton Primary is Outstanding because:

Gatton Primary School exhibits notable strengths in its commitment to Religious Education (RE) and the integration of a faith ethos throughout its operations. The allocation of a fair portion of the school timetable to Islamic Studies (IS), supported by the unwavering dedication of the Al-Risalah Trust, underscores the school's commitment to this key pillar. The faith ethos is deeply embedded in various aspects of the school, as evident in the curriculum's explicit emphasis on the spiritual dimension, emphasizing a strong connection to Allah.

The school's commitment to excellence in Religious Education (RE) is prominently reflected in its overarching vision and curriculum drivers. The school's vision, encapsulated in verse no. 114 from Surah Taha, demonstrates a profound understanding of the imperative nature of action, recognizing a greater being (Allah), and emphasizing the importance of growth and knowledge.

The achievements within the IS curriculum are commendable, with high attainment and progress across all cohorts of learners. The recitation of the Qur'aan, understanding of Islamic studies, and the incorporation of duas and adhkaar demonstrate a robust educational foundation. The positive feedback from parents, as reflected in surveys, attests to the effectiveness of the school's approach, with parents expressing pride in their children's learning experiences.

The school's dedication to fulfilling this vision is evident through the delivery of a high-quality curriculum that focuses on developing children's knowledge, skills and spiritual growth. The emphasis on knowledge as a form of worship aligns with the Qur'aanic guidance, distinguishing it from other worldly pursuits. This commitment to a holistic education is a cornerstone of Gatton School's approach, contributing significantly to the outstanding overall effectiveness of its RE provision.

The well-structured transition curriculum prepares children for secondary school, addressing sensitive topics and providing a platform for children to ask questions. The commitment to intervention sessions, Friday activities and teacher support during the school's Residential reinforces the school's dedication to holistic development.

The integration of cultural capital as a curriculum driver further strengthens the school's commitment to providing a well-rounded education. Gatton Primary School recognizes the importance of cultural awareness, knowledge and competence as key ingredients for success in society and the world of work. This approach not only enhances the quality of RE, but also enriches the overall educational experience for children.

The curriculum drivers, encapsulated in the acronym CHES (Communities, Healthy lives, Environment, Spiritual/moral), reflect the school's all-inclusive approach to education. The focus on making a positive contribution to communities, leading healthy lives, environmental stewardship and fostering a strong connection with Allah aligns seamlessly with the objectives of RE. These drivers contribute to creating a nurturing and enriching environment for children to develop spiritually, morally and academically.

In addition to the curriculum drivers, the incorporation of termly themes complements the overall vision, providing a cohesive and integrated approach to education. The school's commitment to children's personal development, moral purpose and respect for others further reinforces the outstanding overall effectiveness of the RE provided by Gatton Primary School.

While recognizing these strengths, the school accurately identifies areas for improvement. The emphasis on maintaining high-quality learning through the expert teaching model is commendable. Additionally, the school's commitment to developing IS curriculum links with the wider school curriculum reflects a proactive approach to enhance the overall educational experience.

In summary, Gatton Primary School's clear vision, curriculum drivers and commitment to the cultural capital contribute significantly to the outstanding quality of its Religious Education provision. The holistic approach, grounded in with the Islamic ethos, ensures that children not only excel academically, but also develop into well-rounded individuals with a strong connection to their faith and a sense of responsibility towards their communities and the environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Further enhance overall effectiveness and quality of RE by additionally developing the intervention program for those children with additional needs. Fine tune the use of data via the target tracker software.

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

Many children start at the school with very basic Arabic and Islamic knowledge, but due to the well organised delivery of these subjects, are quick to pick up on the core aspects of the same.

Amongst other strategies, the collaboration between the RE and non-RE staff has led to excellent outcomes for the children in RE. This includes assistance from the school's Educational Psychologist in finding ways for staff to adapt the RE curriculum to enable them to support and challenge learners with specific needs. The use of reading rulers and movement breaks are most helpful in such cases.

Literacy levels in RE are enhanced by the use of CUPS (capitalisation, use of vocabulary, punctuation and spelling) and PEEL (point, evidence, explanation and link) with GPCQ (Green Pen Challenge Questions).

During the early years, emphasis is placed upon development of Arabic phonics by the children learning to read the Qaidah. RE teachers not only share good practice, but also pick up ideas by visiting other schools.

The introduction of a new Seerah series along with resources accumulated over many years of delivery help in providing the required texts for the RE curriculum.

Pupil engagement and satisfaction are evident through surveys and discussions, where children express enjoyment in learning about Islam. The inclusion of practical applications, such as collective prayers and modelling of duas, contributes to a holistic educational experience. Additionally, the school's focus on fostering good character, as reflected in displays and assemblies, further strengthens the ethos.

The school has exemplified a robust dedication to its faith ethos and the provision of high-quality education. The self-evaluation aligns seamlessly with the presented evidence, emphasizing accomplishments and articulating a strategic emphasis on continuous improvement, particularly in enhancing the delivery of top-notch learning and further integrating the IS curriculum within the broader educational framework. This approach effectively positions the school for ongoing growth and success in the future. Considering the challenges posed by the diverse starting points of the children, it would be advantageous for the school to persist in developing resources to support all groups of learners on their educational journey.

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

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in delivering the Religious Education (RE) curriculum at Gatton Primary School is exemplary, reflecting a well-crafted and finely tuned approach. The school has strategically structured its curriculum provision ensuring a balanced and comprehensive coverage of core areas. With five lessons per week, each lasting one hour, the focus on three Qur'aan lessons and two Islamic studies lessons allows for depth within each subject. This allocation of dedicated lesson time enables individual attention during Qur'aan learning, fostering a personalized approach.

The school is currently refining the delivery of an expert teaching model-based lesson, aligning with the broader school focus on expert teaching. The well-structured lessons incorporate whole class recitation, modelling of Qaidah rules, independent practice, peer reading and group assessment. The inclusion of clear planning, success criteria and metacognitive strategies emphasizes a commitment to effective teaching methods.

The Islamic Studies (IS) department exhibits a robust and rigorous curriculum covering Seerah, Aqaaid, Fiqh and Islamic history. The incorporation of real-life examples, such as using the swimming pool to discuss the topic of water and impurity, enhances the learning experience. Class teachers actively contribute to extra-curricular activities, including the Year 6 Residential and annual events like Sports Day, showcasing a holistic approach to education.

Interdisciplinary links are seamlessly made within the wider curriculum, connecting topics like planets in science and engaging in discussions on subjects such as evolution. The IS team also encourages projects as homework, promoting a holistic understanding of Aqaaid, Qur'aan poster competitions and participation in broader school events like Black History Month.

Assessment practices align with the school's marking and feedback policy, utilizing a range of techniques such as Assessment for Learning, targeted questioning, and peer assessment. The use of Target Tracker for summative assessments demonstrates a commitment to data-driven analysis and identification of struggling groups within the cohort.

Notably, the school places a strong emphasis on maintaining a positive and inclusive learning environment, where children exhibit exemplary conduct and manners. Instances like the boys and girls football competition highlight the school's commitment to fostering a spirit of community and inclusivity.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

While the Islamic Studies teachers are scholars in Islam and impart their knowledge most effectively, an area for improvement is identified. Further enhancing the provision could be achieved by these teachers acquiring a teaching qualification. This step could contribute to an even more refined and comprehensive pedagogical approach, ensuring alignment with best practices in teaching and learning.

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

The leadership and management at Gatton School exhibit an outstanding commitment to upholding the religious ethos within the institution. The governance structure, comprising school governors, the Al-Risalah Trust Director, Headteacher and leadership team members, demonstrates a deep dedication to maintaining the strength of the religious ethos.

The centrality of the ethos is evident in the core curriculum driver designated to children's spiritual development. The school's vision statement, "My Lord Increase me in knowledge", has been translated into action statements for key stakeholders, children, staff and parents.

The Islamic Studies (IS) ethos report plays a central role in the Governing Body's Teaching and Learning committee meetings, showcasing the long-standing commitment of the governors to ensuring the ethos remains at the core of the school. The Headteacher actively manages the IS department, contributing to the growth of the ethos through weekly assemblies and lesson observations. Regular discussions between the Headteacher and the Religious Education Co-ordinator focus on enhancing the Religious Education provision.

Proudly inclusive, the school ensures Teaching Assistants support the Islamic Studies team for Qur'aan teaching, even welcoming non-Muslim teaching assistants experienced in teaching Qaida. Children participate in a variety of activities reinforcing British values and spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, including student council elections, classroom monitors and various other competitions.

Staff are annually trained in PREVENT, fostering a clear understanding of reporting processes and providing robust support for children through a curriculum that prepares them for life in modern British society.

Safeguarding arrangements are deemed outstanding, with dedicated Designated Safeguarding Leads and a rigorous Single Central Record. The External Speakers' and Charity Policy ensures alignment with the Leaders' expectations, emphasizing adherence to Fundamental British Values

Financial improvements have streamlined the support from parents for the IS provision through a monthly direct debit payment system. The Headteacher ensures that ethos development is integral to the school development plan, resulting in notable impacts on lesson models in IS and a diverse range of enrichment events.

Weekly meetings with the Headteacher and highly successful engagement strategies with parents further demonstrate the outstanding leadership and management at Gatton School. These initiatives include events such as the Seerah exhibition, community iftaar open to parents, biannual parents' evenings, and regular reports. The establishment of an IS email for direct communication with the team reflects the school's commitment to effective collaboration with parents, even those facing challenges in working with the school.

Gatton School's leadership and management are exceptional, fostering a strong religious ethos, promoting inclusivity, and actively engaging with both staff and parents for the benefit of children.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs is Outstanding because:

Religious Education is central to the school's identity, and it is given great importance in the day to day running of the school. The school places great emphasis in ensuring that each child gains a sound knowledge of different strands of the faith and is comfortable with the same.

Due to the broad curriculum, children are able to learn about Belief, Jurisprudence, Qur'aan, History and Du'aa in a robust manner during the school day, which is then strengthened by regular homework.

Together with a sound curriculum base, children have the opportunity to partake in enrichment activities and events to further develop their religious experience. The Seerah Week, Qur'aan Competition, Hajj Experience and the Ramadhan Treasure Hunt are all exciting initiatives which increase the levels of engagement.

Staff across the school benefit from each other's expertise and the RE department supports both Muslim and non-Muslim teachers when delivering topics which can be linked to the teachings of the faith. Religious Education (RE) extends beyond the exclusive purview of the IS department; teachers throughout the school engage in communication and collaboration with the IS team. This collaboration involves consultations on the appropriateness of topics or content from an Islamic perspective, considerations for adhering to dietary requirements when planning events, and ensuring that provisions for prayer spaces are made during trip planning. Notably, even non-Muslim staff actively participate, such as waking up children for Fajr during the annual residential.

In addition, the RE department has been involved in preparing resources such as online quizzes, videos, tutorials and other materials.

The daily act of collective worship, salaah, the RE and wider curriculum contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

The extent of pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is Outstanding because:

The school's SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) provision is extensively cultivated, encompassing a diverse array of formal and informal approaches that establish connections across both implicit and explicit curricula. Children actively engage in a broad spectrum of activities, both within the school premises and the surrounding local community.

Children attend a range of after school clubs, engage in events with other schools, such as the upcoming local schools' Times Tables Challenge. The school has taken part in New Age Kurling competitions, mixed football and netball tournaments and will soon be starting fixtures against a local Private school as well.

The children take part in the annual BATCA Fun Day. This day is organised by the Al-Risalah Trust, St Augustine's Church along with the Balham and Tooting Community Association. The event includes Year 6 pupils competing with each other to win a stall at the event held every year in June.

Children consistently mobilize substantial funds for various charities, including recent initiatives supporting the British Red Cross and Islamic Relief. During last year's Ramadhaan, students raised over £10,000 to combat global child hunger. The funds raised at the annual BATCA Fun-Day charity event contribute to the children's ward at St George's Hospital, with strong connections leading to children participating in summer school programs at the hospital.

Pupils have the chance to take part in experiential learning such as the Seerah exhibition, Hajj journey, Qur'aan competition and the Ramadhaan Treasure Hunt. They learn about and respect their own faith and other major faiths through Religious Education lessons and projects undertaken with young people from other schools and backgrounds.

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 an invigorating discussion around the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity, when teaching about 'Churches throughout the world'. Links were made on how Church bells and Adhan (call to prayer) from the minaret, are methods used to invite the congregations to their respective places of worship and how both faiths have various denominations.

Pupils have a chance to partake in a range of activities which reinforce British values and the wider development of SMSC or in the school the CHES drivers. Pupils take part in student council elections, classroom monitors, peer readers, prefects, eco-warriors.

Pupils take part in a wide range of competitions aimed at children across the range of needs that they have in school including special needs trips for Sport and/or in school competitions.

Ultimately the children grow as confident and articulate young people, due to the range of direct and indirect learning opportunities which are provided to them during their time at Gatton.

Views of parents and carers

Parents overwhelmingly express their support for the school, praising its excellent provision and educational offering, that contribute to the development of confidence and the growth of faith in their children. They find all staff highly approachable, allowing them to raise any concerns effectively. Parents appreciate the school's significant assistance and support, especially for those requiring additional support. The children's politeness, graciousness and exemplary behaviour serve as a reflection of the school's positive impact.

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.