

Eden Boys' Leadership Academy, Birmingham East

Religious School Inspection Report

Local authority: Birmingham
Inspected under the auspices of: AMS-UK
Inspection dates: 20th March 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 Comprehensive URN 145878
School category	Academy Free School
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	614
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of Governors	Shirley Gornall
Principal	Akhmed Hussain
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected.
Address:	441 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham B8 3DT
Telephone number:	01216577200
Email address:	info@ebbhameast.staracademies.org
School website:	http://www.edenboysbirminghameast.com/

Introduction

Inspection team

Lead Inspector Yusuf M Seedat

Team Inspector Mohammad Asad

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors. They visited eleven lessons or parts of lessons including collective prayers session and assembly. They held meetings with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including children's written work, teachers' lesson plans, the RE curriculum, the school's self-evaluation documents and the school's 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

Eden Boys' Leadership Academy, Birmingham East, operating under the umbrella of Star Academies, is dedicated to fostering positive progress through effective collaboration with all stakeholders, both within and outside the Trust. Established in 2018 and relocated to the current site in 2021, as a designated Muslim faith school, it welcomes pupils of all faiths and those with no religious affiliation. The academy's commitment to fostering an environment rooted in Islamic values is evident in its entirely Muslim pupil population. Alongside this, 41% of pupils qualify for free school meals (FSM), highlighting the significant portion facing socio-economic challenges. Additionally, 16% of pupils navigate their educational journey with English as an additional language, highlighting the linguistic diversity within the community.

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' Leadership Academy; Birmingham East is Outstanding because:

Star Academies Trust mandates the integration of the Faithful Stars Framework across its entire network of Faith Ethos schools. This institution diligently applies the Exceptional Character Development Programmes, which include initiatives such as Sunnah fasts, Seerah workshops, Hadith of the Week programs, Spirituality days, and Quran completion. These efforts collectively nurture the growth of well-rounded individuals, and the school has demonstrated remarkable success in implementing these programs, underscoring its dedication to comprehensive character development.

The establishment of a robust culture by school leaders fosters the identification and sharing of best practices among staff. This includes team teaching, peer observations, joint planning, coaching, and subject specific CPD, all aimed at promoting excellence in teaching. The implementation of the 'Teach Like A Star' framework ensures a shared understanding of teaching expectations across the school, with the goal of achieving Star excellence for all teachers. However, while the 2023 results significantly surpassed the national average, there was a decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving grades above five and four. The school acknowledges this issue and has implemented strategies to ensure that interventions and support are provided to improve results and ensure that all pupils achieve grades four or above. The ultimate goal is to achieve 100% grades four and above for all pupils over time.

Moreover, the Religious Studies Subject, and the All Stars Succeed RS Charters play a vital role in promoting and ensuring a consistent approach to RS pedagogy, thus

guaranteeing high-quality provision for all pupils, including those with SEND. This cohesive approach motivates staff to engage in continuous reflection and self-improvement, thereby enhancing their effectiveness as educators and delivering an exceptional curriculum to bolster the Character, Creativity, Curriculum and Community(4Cs.)

The school's leadership, supported effectively by governors, is actively enhancing connections with the local community by promoting awareness of the school's exceptional programmes, involving parents in the educational journey, and fostering collaboration with external organizations.

A comprehensive leadership programme has been instituted to offer a wide array of leadership opportunities, aiming to cultivate character development and community involvement among pupils. Pupils take pride in representing the school in various capacities, including roles like Faith and Character Education (FCE) Ambassadors, Pupil Shura Ambassadors, Library Ambassadors, Sports Leaders, Prefects, and Wellbeing Ambassadors. For example, pupils enthusiastically lead and coordinate numerous charity events, which are warmly embraced by the communities served by the school. The school has effectively raised significant funds for gifts and toys benefiting young patients in local hospitals, hospices, and food shelters. Annually, pupils contribute tens of thousands of pounds to support charitable causes at local, national, and international levels. The school actively participates in community outreach initiatives, including running a weekly food bank in collaboration with local organizations and businesses. They have distributed over nine hundred food parcels to vulnerable community members and provided hot meals to local charities and homeless shelters during the winter. Additionally, they work closely with primary schools to distribute food parcels and hygiene packs to those in need in Birmingham. The school's assembly programme focuses on nurturing faith, service, moral character, and conduct through stories and messages. Pupils enthusiastically engage in charitable activities, raising over £37,000 for national and international charities and delivering more than two hundred parcels to those in need. These initiatives are entirely pupil-led, with pupils showcasing their creativity and entrepreneurship in fundraising activities and coming together to prepare gifts and hampers for the Winter Gift Programme.

Furthermore, the academy collaborates with external agencies such as the Local Authority, NHS, police, and various community groups, including mosques, churches, and food banks, in its commitment to comprehensive pupil support. Through these partnerships, efforts are made to address the multifaceted needs of pupils and their families, ensuring they receive comprehensive support beyond the confines of the classroom.

The school's steadfast dedication to ensuring a safe and secure environment for all stakeholders is evident through its comprehensive safeguarding measures. This attests to the school's ongoing pursuit of excellence and its prioritization of pupil well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Despite the challenges presented by the diverse starting points of the pupils, the school has demonstrated exceptional achievements in GCSE Religious Education. However, the school aims to address the decrease in pupils achieving grades four and above observed in the 2023 results by implementing targeted strategies for improvement. These measures include providing interventions and support to pupils to enhance their academic performance. The school's overarching objective is to ensure that all pupils achieve at least grades four or above, with the ultimate target being 100% grades four or above attainment for all pupils over time.

Achievement of pupils at the school in their religious education is Outstanding because:

The achievement and progress of pupils in Religious Education (RE) at the school are outstanding. Across Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4), as well as among different cohorts, progress consistently exceeds the National Average. Exceptional achievement is evident, particularly in the GCSE RS results for both 2022-2023, with high percentages of pupils achieving higher grades 9-8, 9-7, 9-6 but a slight drop in 2023 in pupils not getting grades four above. The leaders are well aware and have strategies in place to address this.

Key strengths contributing to this outstanding achievement include the implementation of a comprehensive programme of catch-up provision to ensure all pupils reach their potential in public examinations. The RE Schemata are meticulously designed with clearly sequenced and defined knowledge components. Staff benefit from curriculum-related training, which includes subject-specific pedagogy, enhancing their ability to deliver high-quality instruction. Additionally, an enhanced programme of training, lesson visits, and coaching further bolsters teaching effectiveness.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

For continued improvement, the focus should be on sustaining the strong outcomes in GCSE RE over time. This includes specific emphasis on targeted support to increase the proportion of pupils achieving Grades seven or above and no pupils getting grades below four. This targeted approach ensures that the school remains proactive in addressing areas that may benefit from further enhancement, maintaining its commitment to excellence in religious education.

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

Teaching, assessment, behaviour, and learning in Religious Education (RE) at the school consistently receive praise for their exceptional quality. This assessment is supported by various evaluation methods, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupil work, feedback from pupils, and academic achievements. Pupils demonstrate a high level of commitment and enjoyment in RE lessons, which are characterized by engaging, challenging, and well-structured activities that facilitate significant progress.

Pupil behaviour in RE lessons is particularly noteworthy, with regular assessments contributing to excellent progress. Assessments are conducted after each unit and formally at the end of each term to effectively identify and address any gaps in understanding. The school's rigorous quality assurance processes, integrated into the academic calendar, maintain a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement across all departments, including RE.

A comprehensive approach to evaluating the quality of education includes various methods such as lesson observations, pupil feedback, data analysis, and internal and external reviews. A Teaching Profile is maintained to monitor teaching and learning standards across all subjects, guiding support and interventions for both pupils and teachers.

Instructional coaching, support, and interventions are implemented to enhance education quality and pupil outcomes. Regular focus areas from the 'Teach like a Star' handbook, practiced through clinics and reviewed in lessons, contribute to ongoing improvement. An external quality assurance visit in July 2022 affirmed the effective implementation of curricula in RE and noted good consistency in pedagogical approaches and strategies.

Teachers consistently demonstrate high expectations and standards, fostering positive relationships and engagement with pupils. The Teaching Profile indicates that teaching within RE consistently meets or exceeds expectations. Comments from the January 2023 Ofsted inspection affirm that a culture of mutual respect prevails throughout the school. Pupils navigate the school premises calmly and efficiently, while in lessons, they readily meet their teachers' exceptionally high expectations with enthusiasm and focus.

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

Leadership and managers at the school, including the governing body, are unequivocally committed to achieving 'educational excellence' by delivering exceptional Religious Education (RE) provision that reflects the deep commitment of both the school's families to their faith and understanding the faith of others. This dedication extends to ensuring the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils across the curriculum, including RE. although there was a dip in all the pupils achieving grades four and above. The leadership are aware and have a target for all pupils achieve grades four and above.

The school's leaders demonstrate a keen understanding of the pupils, intervening as needed, particularly through extensive revision and catch-up programs implemented during and beyond the pandemic period. This commitment to pupil success is further underscored by a highly qualified and knowledgeable leadership team, as well as a governing body dedicated to instilling a strong sense of purpose and commitment to the Faith and Character Education (FCE) of the school.

A robust faith-based ethos emphasizes the importance of developing good character, serving others, and nurturing British Muslim citizens. This ethos is evident at all levels within the school, with passionate and knowledgeable staff members dedicated to addressing faith-related issues. Additionally, governors play a crucial role in ensuring accountability, supported by comprehensive induction programs and ongoing training.

Financial stability in funding the RE curriculum is ensured through effective management controls, while regular Quality Assurance (QA) audits monitor performance. The pursuit of excellence is relentless, as evidenced by sustained efforts to maintain and improve achievement levels over time.

Leaders' meticulous planning and management extend to the development of the RE curriculum, which prioritizes Islam while incorporating other world faiths. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of thematic studies, drawing on pupils' own experiences.

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of RE are conducted through daily lesson visits, work scrutiny, and comprehensive Performance Management systems. This ensures positive learning experiences and contributes significantly to pupils' academic achievement, personal development, and spiritual, moral, social, and cultural growth.

Equality of opportunity is central to the school's ethos, resulting in positive outcomes for all pupils regardless of background. The school's commitment to quality education extends to safeguarding, with robust policies, training, and procedures in place to ensure the well-being of all stakeholders.

In conclusion, leadership and management at the school are exemplary, with an unwavering commitment to achieving educational excellence through a rigorous and inclusive approach to RE provision and overall school management.

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

At Eden Boys' Leadership academy, Birmingham East, faith lies at the heart the curriculum. Collective Worship is part of the structure of the school day. All pupils pray Zuhr at school in the winter months and have the opportunity to pray Zuhr in the summer months. To help develop pupils further, Salah workshops are offered to pupils for them to become more confident in completing their salah.

The school offers a comprehensive programme of activities designed to promote the core values of Islam: self-discipline, compassion, mutual respect for all and for the earth itself.

Furthermore, the assembly program offers a diverse and inclusive experience that is both motivating and relevant. With carefully curated content, it celebrates the integral role of faith in all aspects of school life, nurturing the spiritual development of pupils. Additionally, it provides valuable insights into various world religions, enriching pupils' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

The school provides an RE curriculum, both through the timetabled lessons each week and through Spirituality drop down days and Spirituality Events. For example, in July 2023 all pupils completed a mock hajj and learnt about the rituals of hajj by re-enacting some of the important rites of hajj. In previous spirituality days, pupils have had the opportunity to learn about the Prophet's migration and how to play the daff. Over the winter break, pupils were invited into school to join a communal talk, dua and iftar event.

The RE scheme puts 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. The school Faith provision including collective worship, follows the Star Faith and Character Education Policy and is both inclusive and comprehensive. The 4Cs framework is at the heart of the school's faith offer.

These learning experiences also have an impact on the wider personal development and the well-being of pupils, for example, some most recent workshops delivered to the pupils through Qatar Foundation International in conjunction with British Council in which pupils took part in calligraphy, Arabic crafts, puppet making and traditional Moroccan tea-making.

Pupils are taught about similarities and differences between various religions and societies through topics of study. For example, in a history lesson observed, the teacher

effectively engaged pupils in a stimulating discussion around the impact on religion under 'The Rise of Stalin,' and the similarities and differences between Islam and Communism. A Hadeeth was also shared about how Islam teaches us to treat all communities kindly, including those who are not Muslims.

As such, 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. Du'aas in both Arabic and English are displayed around the school environment encouraging pupils and adults to pray before entering, eating, drinking water and using the bathroom. 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 pupils taking part in interactive Hadeeth of the Week lessons during form time. In addition, on Fridays, pupils listen to a recitation of Surah Kahf, with translation in English, at the beginning of the day, which fosters a calm and reflective start to the school day.

Throughout the school day pupils are reminded of the remembrance of Allah as nasheeds and dhikr are played during transition times via the school tannoy system. Further, there is a completion of the full Quraan every Friday, and all pupils are provided with a finger counting device/tasbeeh.

Termly events include Spirituality Days and competitions. Themes for Spirituality Days have included life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Hajj, Salah, Life of Prophet Isa (AS), and keeping healthy during Ramadhan. The days are highly regarded by all pupils. Termly FCE competitions have included a Seerah Mastermind, and the Spoken Word. These competitions have encouraged pupils to learn about the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and the life of those who were close to him.

Annual events include the Winter Fast Programme, celebrating Hajj, Muharram, and Ramadhan related activities, such as goal setting through a Ramadhan diary, assemblies, and events to mark special occasions in the faith calendar. More recently pupils have taken part in the 'Salawaat Millions Challenge.' Pupils engaged in this with a lot of enthusiasm. Salawaat booklets were produced for the pupils, and they were all given a digital tracker. The aim was to reach one million salawaat in 2 weeks as a whole school collective worship. This has helped to develop and enhance the spirituality and mindfulness of the pupils.

To enhance collective worship within school, during the winter months, the Adhan is played through the tannoy system during lunch time, this is to raise the spiritual connections pupils have with salah.

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

The school's mission statement and the Character, Creativity, Curriculum, Community(4Cs). This 4Cs framework 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 our school community, including those of other faiths and none. Leaders have a strong sense of moral purpose, and pupils show high levels of respect for others. Pupils act to help those less fortunate than themselves and have well-developed views on a range of moral issues. Pupils understand the concepts of right and wrong. This is reinforced through the STAR values, assemblies, form time, displays, lessons and extracurricular activities.

The school runs a weekly foodbank in collaboration with community organisations and businesses. More than nine hundred food bank parcels have been provided to individuals in the community who are facing vulnerability. Additionally in Winter, hot food has been distributed to local charities and homeless shelters. The school works closely with local primary schools in distributing food parcels and hygiene packs to needy people in Birmingham. The school's assembly programme is characterised by stories, anecdotes and messages pertinent to nurturing a love for faith, service, development of a strong moral character and conduct.

A diverse range of extracurricular activities is available to all pupils at the school, encompassing various options such as Sports Clubs, STEM club, cooking club, nasheed club, and more. Pupils enthusiastically engage in these activities and actively participate, demonstrating their talents and skills not only within the school but also in Trust-wide faith competitions. Among these, events such as Spirited Art and Spoken Word competitions have seen the pupils excel, showcasing their creativity and passion. Many visits and trips have taken place so far, this academic year. This has included trips to Outdoor Learning Centres (Kingswood), careers related events (Birmingham University, Gowling, Howells), recreational venues (Emirates Stadium, Yonex Badminton championships, Warwickshire Cricket Club, GB Basketball), Science Museums and International Visit to Istanbul incorporating art galleries, historical places of cultural significance, and Mosques, and palaces.

The school offers a range of enrichment opportunities, after-school and lunchtime clubs. It offers pupils the opportunity to take part in various enrichment activities. These include the Music (Nasheed) Club, Coding Club, Rubik's Cube Club, Theatre club, writing club, debating club, cooking club, Art club and a range of Sporting activities. Sporting activities include gym club, netball, Football, badminton, taekwondo, and cricket. This includes competitive fixtures and tournaments with our local schools. The programme involves a range of activities – including volunteering, physical assessments, orienteering activities, a residential and a trek. Pupils at the school participate in a number of competitions in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths – including those run by the UK Maths Trust.

Pupils 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

and visits by speakers of different faiths. A pupil said, 'We learn In Islam it is important to respect the other faiths. We also learn about the similarities we have between our faith and the faith of others, for example, the story of Jesus.'

They have the opportunity to work with various local and national organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Trust, Prevent, Kooth, OCF Foundation, Royal Navy, Faith Belief Forum, Qatar Foundation International/British Council, Birmingham City Mission, Birmingham youth Service, etc.

They explore the concepts of right and wrong through assembly, Religious Studies lessons, Citizenship and PSHE lessons. Pupils evaluate the moral and ethical implications of human actions through Science, Religious Studies, Humanities, Citizenship and the morning registration programme. They engage in debating moral and ethical issues through PSHE, Citizenship, Science lessons and monthly Debates in assembly.

They participate in national initiatives and programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, National Citizens Service and CyberFirst from NCSC.

Pupils liaise with external agencies such as Warwickshire Cricket Club, Royal Navy, Holocaust Memorial Trust and Prevent to connect with external professionals.

They have an opportunity to participate in a number of enrichment activities, including UK Maths Challenge, UK Bebras Coding challenge, Arabic Speaking competition, residential at Warwick University, 10-day exchange visit to Istanbul, Türkiye,

There are also many opportunities for pupils to take on pupil leadership roles in the school. Pupil leadership groups include the FCE ambassadors, Reading ambassadors, Librarians, Pupil Shura, Sports leaders. School leaders are pivotal in leading activities in school related to SMSC. Most recently, this has included Spirituality Days and Charity Events. Pupils have had external agencies deliver workshops to help pupils in their understanding and skill of the Islamic arts, through Islamic calligraphy, daff drumming, and geometric tile making.

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They feel it provides excellent provisions and education which helps develop confidence, spirituality and maturity in their children and enables them to grow in faith and behavioural development. Parents agree that all staff are very approachable and that concerns can be raised with any of them, and they would be dealt with appropriately.

They feel that the provisions that the school provides, not only helps to embed love in the pupils for the school but it enables the pupils to grow stronger in their faith and thrive in improving their behaviour. The attendance and impeccable behaviour of the pupils are reflective of this.

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.