



# Al-Jamiah Al-Islamiyyah School

## Inspection report

This inspection was carried out under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) has been approved by the Secretary of State in the Department for Education (DfE) to undertake inspections in designated independent schools within membership of the Christian Schools Trust (CST) or the Association of Muslim Schools UK (AMSUK).

<b>DfE number:</b>	350/6017
<b>Association:</b>	AMSUK
<b>Date of inspection:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> April 2015
<b>Lead Inspector:</b>	Mrs Meg Buckingham
<b>Team inspectors:</b>	Mr Amjad Malik Mr Ken Walze
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	11-26 years. The scope of this inspection was 11-18 years
<b>Number on roll:</b>	257 boys
<b>Full-time:</b>	257 boys
<b>Number of boarders:</b>	145 boys. This provision was not part of this inspection
<b>Number of pupils with an EHC plan or a statement of special educational need:</b>	none
<b>Proprietor:</b>	Trust Board
<b>Executive principal</b>	Mr Masters
<b>Head teacher:</b>	Mr U Adda for afternoon subjects
<b>Address of school:</b>	Willows Lane Bolton BL3 4HF
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## **The purpose and scope of the inspection**

The main purpose of the inspection is twofold. It is to advise the DfE whether the school continues to meet the requirements for registration, and to determine whether the school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of its association. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of The Bridge Schools Inspectorate on the Ofsted website.

## **Information about the school**

Al-Jamiah Al-Islamiyyah was established in 1993 and is an independent boys' day and boarding school with an Islamic ethos and a clear religious purpose. It is situated close to the centre of Bolton and draws day pupils not only from local areas but also pupils as boarders from further afield in the UK and some from Europe.

The curriculum offered is largely as at the time of the last inspection in October 2013 and has two strands: Islamic studies courses taught in the morning and the afternoon curriculum, based on many areas of the National Curriculum. Islamic studies accounts for approximately 60% of curriculum time and the afternoon secondary curriculum takes up 40%. Post-16 students can continue to complete their higher-level Islamic courses to prepare themselves for further religious study and to become Imams for local mosques, and religious leaders in their communities. In addition, Post-16 students can study courses related to their career intentions and literacy skills are offered in conjunction with Bolton College. The background of pupils is similar to that at the time of the last inspection with the majority of pupils and students being British Muslims of South Asian, particularly Bangladeshi heritage. The school states Arabic, Urdu, German, Danish, Dutch, French and Italian are also family languages spoken by pupils. Almost half of the pupils and students are boarders but the scope of this inspection was for pupils aged between 11 and 18 and did not include boarding.

The school's stated guiding principle is '*...to strive to motivate, inspire, educate and rekindle the spark within the hearts of our students*'. More recently, the school has broadened its stated aims to take account of changes in the Independent School Standards including promoting '*British Values, British way of life and British commitments to our students*' and '*...by encouraging pupils and students of all ages to be good British citizens, with a sense of responsibility for their actions, and to encourage positive social participation within their community*' so that '*they become true models of British Muslims, whilst respecting the individuality and spirituality of others.*'

## **Evaluation of the school**

The school is largely achieving its stated aims and has made improvements since the last inspection. The school meets the regulations. The underpinning Islamic ethos and values of the school continue to contribute to pupils' and students' excellent spiritual and moral development. Their social and cultural development is good. The teaching of Islamic studies is consistently good and pupils achieve high

standards. The curriculum and teaching in the afternoon of National Curriculum subjects is satisfactory with some examples of good practice. While pupils make commensurate progress in these lessons, by the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results have not improved in all subjects and overall are below what might be expected nationally. Pupils are well cared for and the welfare, health and safety provision is good. Pupils and their parents are very supportive of the school.

Improvements since the last inspection include the Post-16 provision, which is better matched to students' needs and a clear emphasis across the age groups on promoting British values and service to others. In addition, considerable resources have been put into the thoughtful and good quality refurbishment of parts of the building. These improvements have come about because there has been concerted focus by the senior management team (SMT), supported by the trustees to bring about change. There is a culture of improvement in the school, particularly with recent action to work towards raising standards in the afternoon subjects, especially at Key Stage 4, together with a shared vision to move the school forward.

### **Leadership and Management**

The restructuring of a new senior leadership team that was imminent at the time of the last inspection is now well established under the executive principal who has responsibility for all aspects of the institution. The proprietors who are the trustees have put in place leaders and managers with suitable skills to hold leadership and management roles within the school. They have delegated the day to day running of the school to the executive principal who is much respected as a spiritual, as well as an educational leader. He is well supported by the head teacher with responsibility for the afternoon curriculum whose enthusiasm is infectious and by the head of pastoral care whose calm and supportive approach is much appreciated by pupils. Since the last inspection the SMT is working effectively towards bringing about improvements. The trustees and SMT work well together. The trustees ensure that the SMT carry out their responsibilities and hold them to account.

Pupils' well-being is monitored carefully by the trustees and they have trained themselves to understand the regulatory requirements. The trustees have made themselves aware of the changes that have taken place in the Independent School Standards both since the last inspection and since the beginning of 2015. Some are trained in safeguarding and safer recruitment. There is a shared vision and whole-hearted commitment and enthusiasm amongst leaders and staff creating a culture for improvement and to raise standards. The SMT with support of the trustees is well placed to make future improvements. The regulations are met.

### **Quality of education provided**

The school provides an education with two distinct strands: Islamic courses which are taught in the morning and National Curriculum related subjects taught in the afternoon. These two strands complement each other with a common approach to encouraging positive attitudes to learning. Modern foreign languages, Arabic and Urdu, are taught in the morning contributing to the curriculum more widely for all pupils. The regulations are met.

The quality of the Islamic education is high. It is satisfactory overall in the National Curriculum related subjects. Pupils make commensurate progress. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment at GCSE over recent years in some subjects is not high enough from their starting points. Students in post-16 courses make steady progress, as do pupils that need extra support, including learning English as an additional language (EAL) when they join the school.

The Islamic curriculum is of a high standard and taught in the morning in mixed-age classes according to pupils' and students' previous attainments. This is a major reason why parents send their children to the school and pupils say they wish to attend. The intensive and well planned seven-year programme of Imam training leads to an internal *Alim* (Islamic scholar) qualification. The programme includes *tajweed* (Qur'anic recitation); *tahfeez* (memorisation), and *tafseer* (Qur'anic translation and interpretation), study of *hadith* (accounts of what the Prophet did, said or approved), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *aqeeda* (beliefs) and *seera* (the life of the Prophet Muhammad). The languages used for instruction are Arabic, Urdu and English and pupils achieve very well.

The quality of education provided in the afternoon is satisfactory. In Key Stages 3 and 4 the satisfactory curriculum gives all pupils experiences in the required areas of learning with suitable time given to English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). All these continue to be provided for all pupils in Key Stage 4; there are no options. In addition, pupils in Key Stage 3 learn aspects of British history and geography in the '*Me and my world*' course in Years 7 and 8 and themes are followed up in Year 9 in religious studies. Pupils study art, which includes calligraphy, as part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. All pupils in both key stages have opportunities to learn poetry, perform *nasheeds* (Islamic poems and songs) and undertake some design activities using software. Some older pupils produce fine examples of calligraphy as an extra-curricular activity. However, there is a need to extend further pupils' aesthetic and creative experiences in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Similarly, pupils in Key Stage 4 do not have a broad range of physical activity. At Key Stage 3, within recent weeks, a new course called '*Challenge*' has been introduced to improve pupils' mental maths and, although it is early days, they are responding well. In *Anjumum* lessons in the morning, pupils develop communication skills through role play, discussion and debate, and provide examples of how the Islamic studies complement the skills that are being developed in afternoon lessons.

The curriculum statement for both strands of the curriculum sets out clearly the subjects taught in each Key Stage or year of the *Alim* course. This takes account of the Islamic ethos of the school and sometimes links are made naturally between Islamic values and the afternoon subjects. Schemes of work for afternoon subjects give a clear overview of what pupils will learn and how they will progress in their learning. Teachers highlight opportunities for cross-curricular themes. For example, the school has responded effectively to the new regulations to ensure that the curriculum and its planning reflect the requirement, and the school's unequivocal commitment to promoting fundamental British values. Pupils can explain, for example the need to respect others, whatever their background and their views in

the democratic process, and are taking part in activities related to the imminent general election. This is a positive development since the last inspection.

Post-16 students continue with their *Alim* course and Islamic studies, achieving high standards. The non-religious provision linked to Bolton College has been reviewed and the school's sixth form coordinator has worked effectively as courses are now better matched to students' needs and aspirations. Courses are more vocational at BTEC level one and two and students can study, for example, first aid and have basic level safeguarding training. Some older students are following a certificated course from a private training provider to become learning support assistants and this is contributing to work experience. In class students were seen to be conscientious and giving appropriate support to younger pupils in Key Stage 3. Students are doing well and say that this, and other courses now available, gives them not only relevant qualifications but also the confidence, understanding and skills to help others in preparation for their likely future roles as leaders within their communities.

Careers education has improved and is increasingly taking account of pupils' and students' aspirations and abilities. This aspect is secure in the sixth form where it is effectively organised by the school's sixth form coordinator and through the strengthened links with Bolton College. Pupils are made aware of a broad range of possibilities such as further study, vocational courses at the College and apprenticeships. Work experience is offered as part of the provision. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils have attended taster days and a careers' convention was recently held at the school broadening both their opportunities to meet with adults from different backgrounds, and their horizons for the next stage of their education.

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is in keeping with the school's ethos. It is not taught separately but relevant topics occur across the curriculum and subjects such as physical education, science and religious studies make effective contributions. Mapping has begun to plot PSHEE topics across all the schemes of work. Increasingly, recreational sports activities, themed days and events are used to broaden pupils' experiences.

Provision for EAL pupils has improved and they make good progress from their starting points. This is because the intervention class teacher has relevant experience and pupils' progress is monitored more regularly. However, there is no member of staff designated to coordinate support across the year groups, particularly, for pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs, including those who might be particularly able, gifted or talented. In the best lessons the work is well matched to pupils' needs and they make good progress.

The quality of teaching and learning in the morning Islamic studies is consistently good and pupils reach high standards. In the afternoon classes teaching is satisfactory with some examples of good practice. In the afternoon pupils make commensurate progress in their learning. The majority of afternoon lessons start with the teacher recapping on the previous lesson followed by pupils working individually on activities. In the good lessons, teachers use this approach effectively because challenging questions make pupils think and the other activities are

interesting and well matched to pupils' abilities so they enjoy their learning and make good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they manage and organise the class well, establishing good routines and set high expectations for behaviour. Satisfactory lessons are generally well organised and routines for good behaviour are in place. However, the work is not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities; pupils are more passive and have fewer opportunities to take an active part in lessons. This reduces their progress and the standards they achieve in the lessons.

Resources have improved in some respects since the last inspection for example with sets of good quality text books in some subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the increased availability of computers. Teachers often use PowerPoint presentation to effectively support the learning. Some teachers extend this to the good use of video and more interactive activities, for example, engaging pupils in lively discussion. The libraries provide good opportunities for reading for both interest and study.

Assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory and regular. The assessment data is now recorded so that it can be analysed to track individual progress; this is an improvement. This information is used generally by teachers to help with their planning. The marking policy is not followed by all teachers and consequently marking is inconsistent across the key stages. There are some examples of good marking, which helps pupils to know what they have achieved and how to improve their work. Elsewhere it is cursory and incomplete. This significantly reduces its effectiveness.

At the time of the inspection all Year 11 pupils were on a revision study timetable for GCSE subjects including additional intervention sessions for English. The GCSE examinations results over the past three year have been significantly below what would be expected nationally including last year at 26% 5 A\*-C including English and mathematics. Pupils achieved well in religious studies and reached near national figures in mathematics, but performance is well below expectations in English and science. In response, the SMT with the support of the trustees have put in place an extensive timetable of intervention lessons in Year 10 and particularly in Year 11 for English. With the help of an experienced external consultant who is working closely with staff, the leaders and managers are determined to remedy this situation and to raise standards to help reverse the trend of underachievement in some subjects at the end of Key Stage 4.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Pupils' spiritual and moral development continues to be outstanding and their social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual and moral development is underpinned by the high quality of Islamic studies and the impact of the clear guidance they receive from staff on spiritual matters. Every day pupils have time to reflect on their faith, how they live their lives and how this relates to the beliefs of others. Pupils and students perform their daily prayer reverently. Through the *Anjumum* programme, together with taking the lead in prayers, pupils develop self-esteem and self-confidence. They have a growing understanding of the values that they share with other faiths through the study of the main religions represented in

Britain. Pupils show the ability to recognise right from wrong and the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. Behaviour is excellent; they support each other and know they must show respect to those who have different beliefs or heritage from themselves. Pupils say they enjoy their learning, get on well together and attendance is good. They say this is '*due to Islamic education*' they receive.

Pupils' social and cultural development is good. Pupils participate actively in the school council which is democratically elected, giving them first-hand experience of the democratic process. The local mayor has visited the school, giving pupils an insight into local government. Similarly, representatives of health services have visited as part of pupils' learning about public institutions and the representatives of the British Army have also visited as part of careers education. Pupils are taught to obey the law in the United Kingdom and are taught they have a responsibility to be law-abiding citizens. This is an aim of the school. The executive principal has robust policy and procedures in place made clear to both staff and pupils with regard to the government's 'Prevent' and 'Channel' guidance on extremism and radicalisation. On-going relationships and dialogue with the local constabulary are good, and demonstrate the leaders and managers commitment in this area. Speakers are vetted and it is made clear to staff and pupils that any partisan or extremist views and opinions will not be tolerated. Pupils say they understand this and are aware that everyone should abide by the law of the land.

Pupils and staff come from a range of different cultures and heritages and relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are good. They work harmoniously together, whether they are a day pupils or boarders. Pupils gave examples of how they help each other and provide mutual support. For example, a pupil from abroad who came to the school with little English acknowledged that not only did the teacher help him but '*my friends help me to improve*'.

Much is done within the school to reach into the local community with pupils and students helping to organise fund-raising events for others less fortunate than themselves. Older students serve food at a local charity for homeless people and visit a local hospice. The geographical topics in '*Me and my World*' lessons in Key Stage 3 help pupils to have a global perspective of how other people live and work. The 'faith trail' provides good links that have been formed with other groups in the town, particularly those of different faiths, to help pupils understand and respect people from different backgrounds and with different beliefs. As one pupil put it '*I may not agree with them, or like what they say but I must respect them*'. As they move through the school pupils are gaining skills and positive attitudes to help them make a constructive contribution as British Muslim citizens, in keeping with the aims of the school.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The measures the school has in place to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The school has all the required written policies and suitable procedures that are implemented to enable the pupils to feel safe in the school.

The proprietor and SMT have ensured that the required safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place, consistently implemented and regularly monitored. The school has responded swiftly to recent changes to regulations and enabled all staff to receive the required levels of safeguarding training, in particular, those relating to the new DfE statutory guidance on safeguarding including '*Keeping Children Safe in education*'. Policies for e-safety and cyber-bullying are effectively implemented and pupils report that they know how to keep safe on the internet. They demonstrate good knowledge and good attitudes of respect towards people who may make different choices regarding faith, sexuality and lifestyle.

The school is aware of the need to be vigilant in safeguarding the pupils against extremism and radicalisation and they provide a safe environment for pupils to engage in discussion on the sensitive issues involved. As one pupil remarked there are '*no no-go areas*'. Pupils say they appreciate this openness. Teachers are clearly aware of issues related to fundamental British values and are addressing these through curriculum and subject planning, for example, in afternoon lessons such as English.

Designated staff carry out their duties responsibly in relation to organising health and safety risk assessments, fire safety, ensuring good behaviour and promoting anti-bullying strategies. Extensive records show that the school's policies are implemented to minimise risks to pupils, teachers and visitors. Regular training takes place and appropriate certificates for first aid and fire safety have been gained by staff. The school has an excellent system in place to ensure that the safety equipment is checked regularly and record-keeping is a strong point of the school.

Pupils respond very well to the care provided by the staff. They show respect to their teachers and visitors; they are polite and their behaviour in school is excellent. Relationships are inclusive between pupils and friendships are strong. The staff ensure pupils are well supervised at all times. As a result, pupils are relaxed, happy and confident with adults and with their peers. Pupils say that they feel safe and, although they have no fears about bullying, they know whom to contact if they have concerns.

Teachers and pupils are aware of their personal responsibilities for health and safety matters. Pupils' have a sense of social responsibility as it is promoted well through the school's Islamic ethos and the work done during Islamic education. This work supports the development of a broad health and safety culture with everyone feeling responsible for the identification of hazards and for continuous informal monitoring. The school is committed to making further improvements to the site and has an accessibility plan in place which fulfils its responsibility to the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

The required checks on staff for suitability are carried out prior to their appointment. Scrutiny of a sample of staff files contains evidence that the checks have been completed and this information is recorded appropriately on a single central record.

### **Premises of and accommodation at schools**



The school's premises provide safe and comfortable accommodation for its pupils and students to live and learn, and meets the regulations.

The accommodation in the building is warm, well-ventilated, suitably lit and most rooms are decorated to a standard which supports pupils in their learning. The classrooms and circulation spaces are clean and well maintained, and some areas are enhanced by informative wall displays, which reflect the schools Islamic perspective. Specialist rooms for ICT are well-equipped and used effectively. Teachers do not regularly use the science laboratory lessening pupils' opportunities for extended practical activities. The art room is relatively small and provides limited inspiration for pupils' broader aesthetic development. The pupils do benefit from having available an extensive Islamic library and a smaller library room stocked with books, fiction and non-fiction, in English. Pupils treat their classrooms with care and respect.

The school provides appropriate toilet and shower facilities for the sole use of its pupils and students with a medical room which is suitable for short term care if they are taken ill. Staff and visitors, both male and female have suitable and separate toilet facilities. Drinking water is readily accessible from designated areas in the building and generous provision is made for pupils to perform their ablutions before prayers.

The programme of work to improve the building since the last inspection has been extensive and effective. New windows throughout the school, new carpeting for the prayer hall and the multi-use sports cage outside are of good quality and all enrich the educational experience for the pupils and students. In particular, the windows and outside fencing use an Islamic architectural style adding an aesthetic dimension to the environment. Plans for further development of the premises and accommodation are equally ambitious. The school has another site, about 200m from the main building, used for Islamic studies classes. It is adequately maintained for its current use and procedures are in place to ensure that pupils and staff are safe. Planning permission has been granted to demolish this building and build a new facility.

### **Provision of information**

The school meets the regulations by providing an informative and easy-to-access website showing admission arrangements, the curriculum offered, facilities and relevant policies. The mission statement of the school together with its stated aims and objectives and contact details are also clearly set out. The required policies are easily accessible and are also available for parents and all interested parties on request. Parents' questionnaires completed prior to the inspection show overwhelmingly that they are happy with the education and care provided for their sons and are very supportive of the school.

The school reports regularly to parents about their sons' progress: termly for afternoon subjects and on an annual basis for the Islamic *Alim* course. The reports are detailed and give each pupil's progress on all aspects of the curriculum both morning and afternoon.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school has a clear complaints policy that meets all requirements and is available by request or on the website. Complaints can be resolved informally but provision has been made for formal complaints to be presented to a panel, including members who are independent from the school.

Records of complaints are held confidentially and show that in the last year no formal complaints were received.

### **Compliance with the regulations**

The school meets all of the regulations for registration.

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Meeting the expectations of AMSUK**

The school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of AMSUK.

### **What the school could do to improve further**

As part of future development the school might wish to consider:

- reviewing the afternoon curriculum to extend pupils' creative and physical activities
- improving teaching and learning in the afternoon curriculum and raising standards by the end of Key Stage 4
- providing more opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in practical work, including making more frequent use of the science laboratory
- improving the quality of marking of pupils' work by consistently implementing the marking policy.