

# School inspection report

23 to 25 April 2024

## **Al Kauthar Girls Academy**

Newton Hill Road

Leeds

LS7 4JE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor maintains appropriate oversight of the work of the leadership team to ensure its effectiveness. Leaders ensure that the well-planned curriculum reflects the school's aims and ethos. The school's Islamic values are implemented to pervade school life and underpin its calm and caring environment.
2. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress and resources are used well to support pupils' learning. Marking and feedback are generally of a high quality and used effectively overall to both reinforce and stretch pupils' thinking. Consequently, pupils fully engage with learning and develop a wide range of subject skills. Teaching engages pupils so that they become self-motivated, independent learners who are confident in their abilities. They learn to challenge themselves intellectually. This results in pupils possessing high levels of self-esteem.
3. Through the curriculum, British values, such as individual liberty and the rule of law, are promoted effectively so that pupils show a well-developed respect for people of diverse faiths and cultures. Pupils value the democratic society in which they live and show a genuine interest in the world around them.
4. An age-appropriate curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is in place which includes suitable provision for relationships and sex education (RSE). However, assessment within PSHE, including RSE, is not as developed as in other subjects. As a result, teachers' planning in PSHE and RSE is not always informed by pupils' individual needs and pupils are less informed about their progress and targets for development in these subjects.
5. The extra-curricular activities programme provided is suitable but limited. This restricts pupils' development of a wider set of skills. Pupils express a desire to have more extra-curricular activities.
6. An effective careers programme is in place which provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to explore future careers and develop their understanding of the world of work. Pupils' ability to prepare for life beyond school is enhanced well by the programme, and pupils readily engage with the activities on offer. As a result, pupils feel well prepared for the choices they need to make regarding their next steps in their education.
7. Leaders ensure that the physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils are well supported. Through the education provided and the support of staff who know pupils well, pupils develop secure friendships and grow in self-awareness and self-confidence.
8. Leaders and staff act as positive role models and set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well in school and show high levels of self-discipline. The warm and mutually respectful relationships between pupils and staff enables pupils to readily approach and talk to staff if they have a worry or a concern. This creates a supportive learning environment, giving pupils the opportunity to focus on their studies without any disruptions.
9. Safeguarding procedures, including those for implementing safer recruitment checks, are robust and help to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is promoted effectively. A suitable single central record of appointments is kept. However, some dates of safer recruitment checks recorded did not reflect the original pre-employment check date for some staff, due to the school having overwritten those

dates with dates of more recent checks carried out of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the extra-curricular activities programme to enhance pupils' development of a wider set of skills
- strengthen the assessment of PSHE, including RSE, so that it better informs teachers' planning and pupils' progress
- ensure that the single central record of appointments accurately reflects the dates of all pre-employment checks.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The proprietor monitors the work of leaders regularly and effectively to check how well the school complies with the Standards and meets its aims. Through regular meetings with leaders and visits to observe teaching and learning, the proprietor keeps well informed about the workings of the school. Leaders keep up to date with statutory requirements and demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to enable the school to meet the Standards. They ensure that the school's Islamic values influence all aspects of school life and positively impact the wellbeing of pupils.
11. Leaders and managers are trained appropriately so that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Leaders maintain effective links with external agencies to ensure that pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing is promoted. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are in line with current guidance and meet the needs of pupils. Policies are understood and implemented effectively by leaders and staff.
12. An effective risk management process ensures that potential risks are identified and minimised effectively. Staff are well versed in risk management and receive appropriate training on how to write, implement and review risk assessments. Suitable and comprehensive risk assessments are in place for, for example, health and safety, site security, educational visits and teaching activities such as science experiments and physical activities. Staff routinely risk assess pupils' health and wellbeing needs and any risks relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Senior leaders check all risk assessments carefully and routinely review the risk assessment process, making changes if required.
13. Leaders ensure that the school is an inclusive environment by implementing an appropriate accessibility plan. The school ensures that teaching does not discriminate against pupils. Modifications and reasonable adjustments are made to the curriculum and resources, to meet the needs of pupils, as required. The school meets its requirements under equality legislation.
14. Leaders use self-evaluation effectively to inform their practice. For example, regular evaluation of teaching and learning and systematic tracking of pupils' progress in most subjects enables leaders to identify the strengths and areas for development within the curriculum. This has led to leaders reviewing schemes of work in all subjects to better sequence topics taught and make learning objectives clear. Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that curriculum plans are being implemented effectively.
15. Information is made available and provided to parents as required, through the school's website and via the school office on request. Informative reports regarding pupils' progress are routinely sent to parents. A suitable complaints policy is in place and implemented effectively, with the school addressing any parental concerns promptly. Due to the positive relationships with parents and the accessibility of staff, concerns are usually resolved informally.
16. Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures, including those for carrying out pre-employment checks on staff, are robust and follow statutory guidance. However, at the start of the inspection, leaders were not aware that the dates logged in the single central record of appointments should always reflect the dates of pre-employment checks and not be overwritten by subsequent re-checks, for example, of the DBS and barred list check.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

**17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders provide a well-planned curriculum with an appropriate range of subjects offered that cover all required curriculum areas. Through the curriculum, pupils develop a variety of skills appropriate to their needs and abilities. As a result of effective teaching, pupils listen well and speak out confidently when asked questions. They display well-developed numeracy, mathematical and scientific skills and apply those skills effectively across the curriculum, for example, in geography and citizenship.
19. Effective cross-curricular links ensure that pupils use technology successfully to support and enhance their learning, for example, when using the internet for research, creating presentations and editing video footage. Well-planned teaching enables pupils to effectively develop their logic and reasoning, for example, when writing algorithms in computer science or creating well-sequenced arguments within persuasive writing in English. The carefully planned art curriculum, enables pupils to apply their aesthetic skills creatively, for example, through drawing, collage, ceramics and needlework.
20. The curriculum is adapted as required to best support pupils and cater effectively for pupils' needs. For example, in response to their identification of pupils' reading fluency as an area for development, leaders introduced a new reading programme that has led to improvements in this area. Trained staff ensure the programme's effective delivery and support pupils well with their reading so that all groups of pupils read with greater ease and confidence.
21. Teaching promotes respect and tolerance and does not undermine British values. Teachers treat pupils equally and consistently adapt planning to support pupils' learning needs. Pupils with lower prior attainment are well supported by teachers who design tasks to reinforce learning. Pupils with higher prior attainment are provided with more advanced schemes of work and tasks which stretch their thinking, for example, in Urdu, mathematics and science.
22. Teachers use a range of suitable resources to engage and stimulate pupils. Well-planned activities and effective classroom management provide for calm yet purposeful lessons in which pupils can focus on their work without distraction. Pupils are encouraged by teachers to challenge themselves and teachers develop pupils' curiosity through effective questioning that demonstrates good subject knowledge. Pupils develop independent learning skills well. They display a high degree of self-motivation and a discernible self-discipline.
23. A suitable assessment framework is in place. An effective tracking system, supported by the use of subject 'flight paths', informs teacher planning of most subjects and aids discussions with parents about pupils' progress. Teachers' marking is detailed and informative overall and provides pupils with individualised feedback through the consistent use across most subjects of the school's 'PIN' marking system. Clear targets for improvement are set which motivates pupils to work hard and further challenge themselves. Consequently, pupils make good progress in their learning. They attain well at GCSE, often exceeding their target grades.
24. Trips built into the curriculum, for example, to local museums, escape rooms and theme parks, provide pupils with a number of enrichment and recreational opportunities. Through the provision of activities at break times, such as table tennis and football, pupils are encouraged to socialise, relax and have fun with their friends. Subject support sessions take place, for example, in mathematics and science, and help develop pupils' skills and confidence in these areas. However, the extra-

curricular programme on offer is narrow and very few activities take place routinely across the school week which limits pupils' development of a wider range of skills. Pupils indicate that they would welcome the opportunity for participation in more activities.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**25. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

26. A wide-ranging PSHE programme is provided, including appropriate provision for RSE, and taught in line with the school's ethos. Pupils learn about self-care through topics such as personal hygiene, forming healthy relationships, safe intimacy and consent. Informal discussion takes place after lessons to further develop pupils' understanding and pupils' opinions are sought. However, assessment within PSHE and RSE is less developed than in other subjects and teaching is not always tailored to pupils' individual needs. As a consequence, pupils are less informed about their progress in PSHE and RSE than in other subjects. A more formal assessment programme is currently under development by leaders.
27. The well-planned curriculum and considered teaching, including of how British values interlace with the school's values, promotes mutual respect of others. The teaching of human rights and equality in, for example, citizenship and PSHE, enables pupils to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the protected characteristics. As a result, pupils know not to discriminate against others, including, for example, on the basis of race, sex, gender or disability, and that to do so is wrong and can cause harm.
28. Leaders' promotion of the ethos of the school and the teaching about world faiths and religious ethics, including in Islamic Studies, results in pupils' highly developed spiritual understanding. Pupils are confident to talk about their faith and what it means to them personally. Pupils see their faith as an important part of their daily lives and appreciate the time school builds into the day to support spiritual growth and development, for example, for prayer and daily recital from the Qu'ran. Pupils grow into reflective, self-aware young people with positive self-esteem.
29. A suitable physical education (PE) programme is in place which develops, for example, pupils agility, strength and stamina through a range of activities. Pupils enjoy physical exercise and readily participate in the sports on offer, for example, netball, basketball and rounders. Through the teaching of health related topics within PSHE, pupils understand the importance of regular exercise as well as aspects such as healthy eating and quality sleep, for positive personal wellbeing.
30. An effective behaviour policy is in place which incorporates a rewards and sanctions system that promotes positive pupil behaviour. Leaders and staff respond promptly and consistently to any incidents of misbehaviour, tracking any trends and adapting policy and practice as required. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They understand the importance of the school's code of behaviour and the need to be kind to others.
31. An appropriate anti-bullying strategy is in place. Activities in PSHE and events such as anti-bullying week ensure that pupils know what constitutes bullying and understand the harm that it can do. Staff teach pupils strategies to avoid or respond to bullying, should it occur. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils know to report any bullying incidents to staff.
32. The supervision of pupils is effective, with staff readily available across the school day to monitor and attend to pupils' needs. First aid, if required, is carried out swiftly by appropriately trained first aiders and pupils' medical needs are well supported. Leaders act quickly to make any changes if any patterns or trends emerge when analysing accident data. These measures contribute to pupils being well cared for by staff.

33. Effective policies and procedures are in place for health and safety, including fire safety. Any issues are reported promptly by staff and acted upon appropriately. Leaders make effective use of external specialists to carry out routine legionella tests and safety checks on fire and electrical equipment. Effective oversight of health and safety is maintained through regular meetings between leaders and the governor for health and safety. An appropriate fire risk assessment is in place and leaders act on any required improvements swiftly. Pupils understand the risk of fire and are taught of the need to be vigilant to any health and safety issues. Routine fire drills take place each term and pupils respond swiftly.
34. The premises and accommodation, including the teaching facilities and outdoor spaces are suitably and systematically maintained. Lighting, acoustic management and the provision of water and toilet facilities are appropriate.
35. A suitable admission and attendance register is maintained and correctly stored. Staff monitor attendance effectively and follow up any absences promptly. This ensures that pupil attendance remains high. Information about pupils joining and leaving the school at non-standard times is accurately recorded and shared with the local authority.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 36. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

37. The school actively promotes a curriculum that reflects the ethos of the school by encouraging mutual respect and tolerance of others. Through Islamic studies, PSHE and educational visits, such as to museums and local religious establishments, pupils develop an appreciation of different faiths and cultural identities. This develops pupils' understanding of their locality and helps prepare them for future life in British society.
38. British values are effectively promoted throughout the curriculum, for example, in citizenship and PSHE. Topics covered develop pupils' understanding of individual liberty and how democracy works. For example, pupils learn about the importance of free speech and the democratic election process for choosing members of Parliament. Pupils build on this understanding when electing the school council. The school ensures that a balanced and unbiased perspective is presented to pupils on political views.
39. Talks from visiting speakers, for example, the police and local magistrates, ensure that pupils learn about societal issues, British law and public institutions. Pupils explore the role of, for example, criminal courts and the effect on society of youth crime. As a result, pupils develop respect for the law. They demonstrate a clear understanding of right from wrong, are aware that actions can have consequences and that breaking the law can lead to imprisonment.
40. Through a varied and effective careers programme, leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Activities, such as attendance at careers fairs, talks from local professionals and work experience, give pupils the opportunity to research and understand different careers. Pupils are well informed about A-level options and typically go on to succeed at a range of local sixth forms. The careers guidance enables pupils to make informed choices about their option subjects and understand how different subjects might relate to different career paths.
41. The PSHE programme and other lessons within the curriculum enable pupils to develop economic and financial awareness. For example, pupils learn about the tax system in citizenship and cost out broadband providers in computer science. Pupils learn about the need for good money management as part of leading a successful life and the benefits of saving money whenever possible by not overspending unnecessarily.
42. Activities provided by staff, for example, through the house system, enable pupils to work collaboratively with those of different ages and pupils develop their social skills as a consequence. Older pupils readily engage in mentoring activities, such as helping younger pupils with reading or mathematics. These activities contribute to the development of a respectful, friendly and supportive learning community.
43. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to make positive contributions to the community, for example, by volunteering to litter pick or visiting a local old people's home. Pupils learn the importance of service and helping those in need. This helps them understand the value of empathy, kindness and compassion for others. Leaders promote fundraising for charity and pupils readily engage with this, for example, in organising stalls for the school's community charity fair. Pupils raise money for a range of causes chosen by themselves, including a local hospice, a charity supporting refugees and international aid projects.

44. Leaders enable pupils' opinions to be well represented, for example, through regular meetings of the school council and weekly 'halka' discussion groups. Pupils are given autonomy to discuss ideas of how to improve school life, for example, by suggesting school trips or changes to the school uniform. Leaders value pupils' views and pupils' feedback is sought on many areas of school life. This enables pupils to contribute to the decision-making of the school.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

**45. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

46. Suitable arrangements are in place to safeguard pupils. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of the safeguarding process through regular meetings with the safeguarding team. An up to date safeguarding policy which reflects current statutory guidance is reviewed annually and provides staff with helpful information.
47. Staff are appropriately trained and understand the role they play in safeguarding pupils. Any concerns are reported promptly by staff to the appropriate leaders. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities maintain detailed records of safeguarding concerns and the actions taken in response to these. These records are kept securely and trends analysed and acted upon as required. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to help safeguard pupils. Advice is sought quickly and appropriate action taken, including making referrals to children’s services and other relevant safeguarding partners, if required.
48. The school has suitable procedures to deal with any safeguarding allegations against staff and whistleblowing procedures are well understood by staff. Staff know when and how to refer any low-level or more serious concerns.
49. The PSHE programme makes an effective contribution to safeguarding by raising pupils’ awareness of how to keep safe and manage risk. Pupils are informed about how to report any concerns they may have and are confident to do so. The ‘Ear I Am’ weekly drop-in sessions provide a forum for pupils to share with safeguarding leaders any issues that may be concerning them.
50. Suitable monitoring and filtering systems are in place to safeguard pupils when using the internet. Pupils understand how to protect themselves when online and know to report any issues they may experience when using social media or engaging in other online activity.
51. An effective strategy to meet the requirements of the ‘Prevent’ duty is in place. Staff are appropriately trained. They understand the risks to pupils of exposure to extremism and radicalisation and are alert to any potential signs of this, such changes in pupils’ behaviour or use of language.
52. The school carries out all required pre-employment checks and a suitable record of appointments is kept. However, at the start of the inspection, some entries within the single central record of appointments did not reflect the original date of the pre-employment check of the DBS certificate and the barred list. In those cases, the date of the original pre-employment checks had been overwritten with the date of a later re-check of the DBS certificate, including the barred list. Well-organised staff employment files are kept appropriately and contain all required content.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

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| <b>School</b>                          | Al Kauthar Girls Academy   |
| <b>Department for Education number</b> | 383/6119   |
| <b>Address</b>                         | Al Kauthar Girls Academy<br>Newton Hill Road<br>Leeds<br>West Yorkshire<br>LS7 4JE |
| <b>Phone number</b>                    | 0113 2624001   |
| <b>Email address</b>                   | info@alkauthar.academy   |
| <b>Website</b>                         | <a href="https://alkauthar.academy">https://alkauthar.academy</a>                  |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                      | Mr Parviz Hussain  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                     | Mr Mohammed Sheikh   |
| <b>Age range</b>                       | 11 to 16   |
| <b>Number of pupils</b>                | 44   |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>     | 29 June to 1 July 2021   |

## Information about the school

54. Al Kauthar Girls Academy is an independent day school for female pupils located in Leeds, West Yorkshire. The school has an Islamic character. It is overseen by a governing body, the chair of which is the registered proprietor of the school. Up until September 2023 the school was known as New Horizon Community School. The school has been previously inspected by Ofsted.
55. There are no pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
56. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
57. The school states it aims to provide a well-rounded education based on Islamic values, which allows pupils to grow intellectually and develop their faith in a safe and caring environment. The objective is that pupils become confident, responsible and inspiring young people as they grow in their faith and become upstanding members of society who enrich life for themselves and others.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

23 to 25 April 2024

58. A team of three inspectors visited the school across two and a half days.

59. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

60. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

61. This is the first inspection of the school by ISI.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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