

Iqra High School

319 Waterloo Street, Glodwick, Oldham, Lancashire OL4 1ER

Inspection dates

26–28 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and the proprietors have turned Iqra High School around. The school now provides a good quality of education.
- The school's Islamic values of respect and tolerance shine through and are at the heart of all the school does.
- The headteacher has made effective bold decisions. She and her enthusiastic leadership team have brought about considerable improvements to all aspects of the school's work.
- The proprietors and governors are now making a valuable contribution to school improvement. They have ensured that the independent school standards are fully met.
- Significant improvements in the quality of the curriculum and of teaching throughout the school have resulted in the vast majority of pupils making good progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is evident in their good attendance.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They conduct themselves well around the school.
- Leaders are diligent in their responsibilities for safeguarding and pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are an important part of the work of the school. Strong, positive relationships contribute to pupils developing their self-esteem and identity.
- The curriculum has greatly improved. Pupils particularly love the enrichment curriculum, which makes an important contribution to their confidence and sense of the wider community.
- Opportunities to extend and challenge pupils to move on with their learning and think more deeply about their work are sometimes missed, especially for the most able.
- Teachers do not routinely ask sufficiently probing questions to encourage pupils to reason and to deepen their thinking.
- Leaders' collection and use of assessment information are now effective. Teachers use well the information they gather. However, leaders and governors are not using information effectively enough to gain an overview of the academic progress of pupils over time.
- The organisation and procedures for the administration of the provision for pupils with special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) are underdeveloped.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and the associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise the level of challenge offered to pupils, especially the most able, so that they move on in their learning, think more deeply about their work and further increase their knowledge and skills
 - are confident in asking pupils questions which encourage them to reason and to deepen their thinking about what they are learning.
- Further improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders and governors have sufficient information to effectively gain an overview of pupils' academic progress over time
 - the organisation and procedures for administering the provision for pupils with SEND are developed fully.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Iqra is a good school. The proprietor, leaders and governors have responded firmly to the issues raised at the previous inspection, both in terms of the significant number of independent school standards not met and the poor standard of education offered to pupils.
- Leaders' actions have been decisive. The proprietor, leaders and the governors have ensured that all the independent school standards are now met.
- The proprietor and governors have wisely appointed a strong, dynamic headteacher who, along with her leadership team, has reversed the decline in standards. They have done this by raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and radically changing the school's approach to teaching. Together with the whole staff team, leaders have led the way to providing good opportunities for pupils to achieve and develop as well-rounded individuals.
- The school's Islamic values are a prominent part of school life. Pupils and staff talk frequently about values such as respect, kindness and tolerance. These qualities were much in evidence during the inspection. The good understanding of such values has resulted in pupils who are caring, considerate and respectful of each other and the wider community.
- The headteacher has successfully steered the school through a very challenging time. She has led by example and played a central role in getting the school back on track with the aim to offer the very best education. Relationships between staff are very positive. They express a strong commitment to leaders and are proud to work at the school, which now benefits from a stable, happy and dedicated team.
- The headteacher is ably assisted by a wider leadership team. Together, they are a skilled, enthusiastic and focused group who accurately identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their reflective, proactive approach is evident in a detailed school development plan. This outlines precisely how leaders will address those areas needing further attention.
- Leaders have inspired the whole staff team to work together to develop the school. As a result, the staff team is motivated to make sure that there is continuing improvement. Leaders have developed effective systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders have been successful in ensuring that pupils make good progress throughout the school and this is clearly evidenced in pupils' workbooks. Evidence shows that there is still inconsistency in how much challenge is given to some pupils. Leaders have improved teaching and recognise the aspects which still need attention.
- Leaders have developed a clear and straightforward system to assess pupils and to check on their individual progress in curricular subjects. The system has not been in place for a full year but time has been taken to ensure that the information gathered is precise and accurate. However, leaders and governors do not yet use the information available to them to gain a clear overview of pupils' academic progress over time.
- The school does not receive any pupil premium funding or additional funding for pupils

with SEND. A small number of pupils are identified as requiring additional support for their learning. Staff are vigilant to the welfare needs of these pupils, which helps pupils succeed in their learning and personal and social development. A coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND has only just been appointed and requires training to ensure that the necessary systems and procedures are in place.

- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, which pupils find engaging. They benefit from a wide range of subjects, including science, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and Urdu. In addition, pupils' personal and social development and emotional health are promoted through citizenship, mental health and well-being, and Islamic studies. Teachers draw on pupils' interests and ensure that they see their learning as relevant.
- A favourite part of the curriculum for both pupils and staff is the school's enrichment curriculum. This has been introduced by the new headteacher and involves a week of activities, events and trips for the whole school. They learn about topics as diverse as Black history, road safety, and the global environment. Pupils also enjoy a range of activities, including trips to police and fire stations, universities and hospitals, and visits to local museums. They also enjoy physical activities, such as boxing as a form of self-defence. These make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through all the school's activities but is strongest through the school's enrichment curriculum. Pupils consider it extremely important to make a positive contribution to the local and wider community. Pupils learn about, and participate in, activities which encourage them to find out about other faiths and raise funds for a wide range of charities. Pupils embody British values, such as tolerance and respecting differences. They are keen to learn about the rule of law and democracy through holding their own elections and visits to court rooms and council offices.
- Leaders have drawn upon their good working relationships with other Muslim schools to support the ongoing school improvement.

Governance

- The governing body is effective. The re-invigorated governing body has shown determination and focus in its work to significantly improve Iqra.
- Governors share a whole-hearted commitment to improving the school and pupils' academic, social and emotional outcomes. They are now making an active contribution to the life of the school.
- Governors use the range of their experience and expertise to good effect. They fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and provide appropriate challenge to leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness, although they lack sufficient information to effectively gain an overview of the academic progress of pupils over time.
- Governors know the school well and have worked rigorously with proprietors and school leaders to ensure that the school is compliant with all the independent school standards. They provide suitable support to the headteacher in holding staff to account.
- Governors are now diligent in carrying out their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have reversed the findings of the previous inspection and have now ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are compliant and fit for purpose. Leaders demonstrate a high degree of knowledge in all matters relating to safeguarding and welfare.
- Safeguarding has a high priority in the school. Leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from a safe and secure environment by promoting the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Leaders maintain detailed safeguarding records. Senior leaders and governors undertake regular and appropriate training, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents and carers on request. It is also available on the school's website.
- The school's pastoral support for pupils is good. Staff, overseen by the designated leader for safeguarding, coordinate every aspect of the care that is offered to vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Leaders are aware of those pupils in their care who are vulnerable. They are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Good relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have worked extremely successfully to significantly improve teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders have ensured that all members of staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. They have introduced new approaches and expectations of teaching, all to great effect. This has resulted in pupils making good progress.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Staff model consistent expectations and approaches for pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils rise to this by working hard and behaving well. Pupils have a good attitude to learning and take pride in their work, which is well presented. They say they enjoy their lessons and like coming to school, particularly because they 'like their teachers' and teachers 'help them learn'. When they struggle, they say adults will always help them to understand.
- Teachers consistently follow agreed approaches to teaching across the curriculum, including for English, mathematics, science, Islamic studies and citizenship. This has been an important factor in accelerating the progress of pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They explain new ideas clearly and simply, relating difficult concepts to prior learning. Pupils are offered good-quality resources to support their learning.
- Overall, teachers provide pupils with well-prepared, motivating activities which capture their interest. Teachers plan activities which offer pupils different levels of challenge. Sometimes, the level of challenge is not sufficient to encourage some pupils to use their knowledge and skills to think more deeply about their work and extend themselves. A few pupils are not learning as much as they could. This is particularly the case for a few of the

most able pupils, who may have to sit through explanations and concepts about things they already know and can do.

- Teachers' questions do not routinely deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers sometimes challenge pupils through their questioning. When this is the case, pupils make links between different areas of learning, which deepens their understanding. Too often, however, teachers' questioning is superficial. It does not encourage pupils to think through and to reason.
- A significant improvement is the way in which assessment information is now collected and used. Teachers know their pupils well and use this good-quality assessment information to track the progress different groups of pupils make.
- Teachers identify quickly when pupils struggle with their learning. They are provided with support and a range of learning opportunities to help them to catch up. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- The school offers appropriate support to those pupils with SEND. Leaders are well aware of who needs additional support and they are quick to offer support to them. Overall, these pupils make good progress in lessons and over time.
- The development of pupils' reading, writing, grammatical and mathematical skills is a high priority in school. Wherever possible, the school links these subjects across the curriculum. The school is particularly focusing on improving pupils' reading skills. This has been identified as an area that could be greatly enhanced across the school. Leaders have just introduced a system to assess every pupil's reading age. They are about to introduce a systematic reading approach for those pupils who need it. They are also exploring ways in which they can increase the range of books and texts offered to pupils of all abilities to instil a love of reading.
- Pupils say they enjoy their learning much more than they used to. This is because lessons are more structured, and teachers make them more interesting, but also they take the time to explain and listen to pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Both are central to the work of the school, which is guided by the school's Islamic ethos and values. Leaders and governors have worked successfully to address the issues identified at the time of the previous inspection. They are now committed in their responsibility to ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils can learn.
- The school offers a good personal, social, emotional and health curriculum. Leaders consider it important to equip pupils with skills which promote the value and importance of well-being, respect, tolerance and being responsible and well-balanced citizens. They also recognise the importance of ensuring that pupils regularly discuss the mental health issues they may face as they grow up, for example depression, self-harm and the need to eat healthy food.
- Staff treat pupils with consideration and ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcome and valued. Adults model respectful behaviour in lessons, around school and in

the way in which they engage with pupils. As a result, pupils behave similarly and are thoughtful and compassionate.

- Staff and pupils openly discuss differences in people and lifestyles. Pupils of all ages respond with maturity and empathy for others. Pupils spoken with at the time of the inspection were keen to talk about how they enjoy being involved in 'random acts of kindness'. They felt it provides them with a sense of care for each other and the wider community.
- Teachers encourage pupils to be ambitious about their future careers. Independent careers information, advice and guidance are offered to pupils from Year 7 onwards. For the first year, leaders are able to organise work experience placements for pupils. Most pupils are clear that they would like to go on to further education and are exploring career pathways as diverse as medicine, the police and fashion design.
- Pupils spoken with during the inspection are clear about what bullying is and say that incidents are very rare. They are confident that teachers deal effectively with any issues which may arise. Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe personally and online.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, feel the school has greatly improved. They feel their daughter is happy and looked after well. A number of parents were keen to say their children enjoyed school and any issues which may arise are always dealt with quickly by teachers. Typical sentiments include 'Iqra is a school with a warm and vibrant vibe when you walk in.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils rise to the expectations placed upon them with regard to their behaviour, and conduct themselves well.
- Pupils are welcoming, although they can be shy. However, their natural curiosity and pleasure in meeting new people shine through.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and are proud of the improved classrooms and learning spaces. A group of pupils laughed about a large nursery mural that used to be in their classroom, saying, 'Now our classroom looks like a place we can study and learn.' They are proud of their school, which is a calm, orderly place where pupils feel safe and able to learn.
- Staff and pupils know each other well and are friendly, supportive and encouraging. At break and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy talking to each other and staff. Lunchtime is a particularly social time during which pupils sit round in groups chatting enthusiastically to their friends. They enjoy the opportunity to go outside to play in an adjacent area loaned to the school by the local church. Pupils have been planning ways to improve the space with raised flower beds and benches on which to sit.
- Pupils say incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare and dealt with quickly by staff. School behaviour logs confirm this.
- Pupils' attitude to learning is good. Many remember when their education was not of a good quality and appreciate the enormous change there has been. Pupils say how they enjoy working hard and very much appreciate the learning opportunities they are now

given. Very occasionally, if pupils are not appropriately challenged by their work, they can be distracted and lose concentration.

- Leaders have established effective systems for monitoring absence. Pupils are rewarded for good attendance, and the virtues of attending school are regularly promoted. As a result, pupils' attendance is above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- At the time of the last inspection, the vast majority of pupils were significantly underachieving. The dynamic actions of the senior leaders and the positive response from staff have resulted in significant improvements. Leaders have reversed the trend, with the vast majority of pupils across the school now making good progress from their starting points.
- Many pupils join the school in Year 7 with skills, knowledge and understanding similar to other pupils of their age. Leaders use the assessment information available from the pupils' previous school and complement this with a range of their own assessments to confirm starting points. The school's ongoing tracking of pupils' progress through this academic year so far and the work in pupils' books confirm that pupils are making good progress.
- The attainment of pupils who have attended the school for up to four years has been reassessed by the new school leaders. Through a combination of raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, insisting on good-quality teaching and learning, and close, precise monitoring of pupils' progress, these pupils are catching up rapidly. Assessment information and their workbooks confirm that they are much closer to attaining the standards they should.
- An example of the improvement can be seen at the end of key stage 4. Intensive support was given by leaders to the school's first Year 11 class, many of whom, in Year 10, were ill equipped to enter and achieve GCSE examinations. In 2018, pupils took GCSE English literature, English language, mathematics, combined science, religious education, citizenship and Urdu and a BTEC in Business Studies and ICT. The vast majority of pupils attained good passes in these subjects. Although the progress they made during their time at school was seriously hampered leading up to their final year in school, by the end of Year 11, their progress was close to that made by pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Leaders are not complacent. They know that there is still much work to do to ensure pupils' even more consistently strong progress throughout the school. However, they have demonstrated that they can reverse the underachievement of the past. They are now able to offer pupils a curriculum and quality of teaching and learning that will ensure that all pupils continue to achieve to their full potential.
- Pupils who struggle with aspects of their learning are quickly identified and activities are planned for them to catch up. For example, those who have low reading ages are supported intensively to give them the skills they need to decode correctly. They also read regularly with an adult in school.
- Although the coordination and organisation of the provision for pupils with SEND are incomplete and at a very early stage, identified pupils do make good progress because

the same thorough system of assessment and tracking is used to check they are on track and are offered additional support where needed.

- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are encouraged to be ambitious and to explore their aspirations. They are helped to make informed decisions about how to pursue their goals for the future. Last year saw the first Year 11 group leaving the school. All pupils went on to further education or apprenticeships.

School details

Unique reference number	141087
DfE registration number	353/6002
Inspection number	10067918

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Iqra Educational and Welfare Trust
Chair	Mohammed Zahid
Headteacher	Tahira Parveen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,300 to £2,350
Telephone number	0161 652 8563
Website	www.iqrahs.org.uk
Email address	headteacher@iqrahs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–8 June 2017

Information about this school

- Iqra High School is an independent Muslim day school for pupils between 11 and 16 years of age. The school is owned by the Iqra Educational and Welfare Trust, which is a charity. The school is non-selective. It is located in the Glodwick area of Oldham on the same site as a madrasa, which is managed by the Khadija Education and Youth Centre and attended by both boys and girls. A good proportion of girls who attend the school also attend the madrasa in the evening to undertake Koranic and Islamic studies.
- The school was opened in September 2014. It is registered for 100 pupils and there are 71 girls on roll. Although the school is registered for girls and boys, no boys have attended the school. No pupil has an education, health and care plan.

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- All pupils are of British, Arab or Asian heritage.
- There are no pupils identified as being disadvantaged.
- The school offers secular and Islamic education.
- The school's vision, values and aims are:

'Iqra High School will become a centre of achievement for all pupils, irrespective of their background and ethnicity. We sincerely intend to produce learners who are confident individuals, responsible citizens and positive contributors to our own community and society at large. We will become a beacon of high-quality and lifelong learning at all levels. All of our pupils will develop better understanding of Islamic faith, positive self-esteem, confidence, high aspirations and an ambition to achieve their full potential.'

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in classes. She also observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. She observed pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior leaders responsible for assessment, teaching and learning and the designated lead for safeguarding. She also spoke with the lead for the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector spoke with two representatives of the proprietorship of the school and three members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector spoke informally with pupils around school and discussed with some pupils their opinions about the school and their learning.
- The lead inspector took account of 15 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. She also took account of seven responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- School policies and other documents were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards and to provide other inspection evidence, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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