



Madani Secondary Girls' 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).

DfE number:	211/6383
Association:	AMSUK
Date of inspection:	26 th - 29 th January 2015
Lead Inspector:	Mrs M Buckingham
Team inspectors:	Mrs H Varachia Mrs M Wiltshire
Age range of pupils:	11-18 years
Number on roll:	249 girls
Number of pupils with an EHC plan or a statement of special educational need:	None
Proprietor:	Madani School Trust
Head teacher:	Shaykh Muhammad Saleem Nawab
Address of school:	Myrdle Street, London E1 1HL
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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

Madani Secondary Girls' School is an Islamic day school and is part of the Madani School Trust. This Trust oversees the school and other community activities including a *madrasa* (religious classes) held in the evenings and at weekends. The school has been established for 23 years moving to its present premises in 2001. Pupils are fluent in English with the majority having Bengali, Somali, Arabic or Urdu family linguistic heritage. The small sixth form has 20 students with just over half being part-time. There are two strands for study: Islamic courses and academic Advanced levels. Students can follow one or the other or a combination from both strands.

The school was last inspected by BSI in October 2011 and there have been several monitoring visits in the intervening years at the request of the DfE.

The school aims to provide:

- 'A caring, safe and secure teaching and learning environment for our pupils
- A broad and balanced education in accordance with the National Curriculum in an environment that supports their spiritual, academic and personal growth for all our pupils
- Creative and challenging lessons
- Fair treatment for all pupils
- Career guidance and future opportunities

We also aim to provide our pupils with the opportunity to:

- learn and explore the teachings of Islam within the Qur'an and Sunna of our beloved prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him)' and to
- 'cultivate in each child the understanding that every individual is a valued member of our school community
- nurture spiritual growth within each child, which we hope will consequently lead them to become balanced, pious and upright citizens'

Evaluation of the school

The school is achieving its aims because of the significant and positive improvements that have taken place since the last inspection. The curriculum has broadened and the quality of teaching and learning is now good overall, so that by the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils have made good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides an orderly environment, and pupils have a secure sense of their Islamic beliefs coupled with a

good understanding of British values. Welfare, health and safety procedures have regard to government guidance. Pupils are well cared for. They say they feel safe in school and enjoy their learning. As a consequence, their behaviour and attendance are good. The school is tackling some pupils' lateness. Since the last inspection a new management structure has been put in place so that the proprietorial body and governors are developing a more strategic role in supporting the senior leadership team that has brought about improvements since the last inspection. The majority of parents report that they value their daughters' education in the school. Regulations are met. However, in order to sustain and build on these improvements the assessment and recording system, including marking, needs to be completed and fully implemented and a more detailed improvement plan with both short and medium targets needs to be developed.

Leadership and Management

Since the last inspection there have been improvements in managing the school. A new management structure has been put in place so that the proprietorial body and an executive committee that acts as a governing body are developing a strategic role in supporting the new senior leadership team that has brought about improvements. The Trustees, who are the proprietorial body, have delegated review of policies to the governors that now has some members with extensive educational and business knowledge and expertise. It also includes experts in Islamic studies. They meet regularly to check on developments with the relatively new senior leadership team. This team comprises the principal, vice principal and two assistant head teachers with responsibility for either education or pastoral care. They now have clearly designated responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the school. They work well together to create an orderly environment for learning, provide good pastoral support for pupils and have brought about improvements in teaching and learning and in pupils' achievements. The high turnover of staff at the end of the last academic year was a significant challenge to managing the school. However, a number of qualified teachers, for example, in science and computing, were appointed to fill the vacancies, as well as new staff with relevant background training for Islamic studies courses. These appointments and an increase in lesson evaluations by the assistant head for education have contributed to the overall improvements in the quality of teaching across the school. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 4 examination results have improved and last year were above national figures. A governor, with relevant skills is the designated link for safeguarding and suitable procedures have been put in place to check the requirements and ensure that they are met. The management of the school is aware of its responsibilities for checking that the requirements are in place and more recently has done so. This is on-going. Although regulatory requirements are met, it is recommended that the regular checks are more fully documented. A school development plan has been produced but it does not go further than the middle of the spring term. A more detailed and longer-term plan is needed with specific details, including how improvements are to be sustained, and with input from teachers.

Quality of education provided

The curriculum is broad and covers all the required areas of learning for independent schools, though the aesthetic and creative area is relatively weaker in Key Stage 4.

It is based on most subjects of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 3 pupils study English, mathematics, science, computing, physical education (PE), art, history, geography, citizenship, Arabic as a modern foreign language and Islamic studies (IS). At Key Stage 4 pupils do not have options of subjects. All study for GCSE in English, mathematics, science, computing, citizenship, history, Arabic, religious studies (RS) and Islamic studies. Pupils also continue with PE.

In the sixth form students may choose to follow an Islamic studies programme or Advanced level courses, for example in English, biology or chemistry, or a combination of both. About half of the students are part-time. They welcome the flexibility the curriculum strands offer and say it is preparing them for the next stage in their education. For many, this is to enter higher education.

The Islamic studies curriculum is good. It covers amongst other disciplines, *tajweed*, (rules of recitation of the Qur'an), *usul-ul fiqh* (jurisprudence), Qur'an, *seerah* (life of the Prophet), and purification. Pupils sit the RS examination in Year 10 and achieve well. More general topics are covered in Year 11 alongside further study of the *seerah*.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHEE) topics are appropriate and mainly covered in the tutorial programme, themes in assemblies and aspects in science and citizenship. Not all the subject planning identifies the links. It would be helpful to check that this is fully in place across the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by a good number of educational visits to places of interest to support and enliven pupils' experiences. A number of parents reported in the questionnaires that they completed prior to the inspection that they felt there were not enough such visits – inspectors found that there were a good range of visits to support the curriculum. Pupils said that they enjoyed the visits to broaden their horizons.

Careers education is now part of the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4, which was not the case at the last inspection. A significant improvement is that all Year 10 pupils now do a two weeks work experience placement. This occurred during the inspection with pupils working in, for example primary schools, pharmacies and libraries. This gives pupils valuable experiences of the world of work. It also gives them first-hand knowledge of public institutions in England and how they work.

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good, with an example of outstanding practice; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Schemes of work are based on National Curriculum and other commercial materials and are used to plan effectively. However, subject documents make little or no references to Islamic perspectives and the contribution to be made to the ethos of the school. Pupils are taught Qur'an by specialist teachers and the impact of this on increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an is clear. In an outstanding Qur'an lesson pupils showed growing self-confidence and their willingness to use their own initiative when they were asked to identify the rules of *tajweed*. Beautiful recitation by the subject teacher was listened to with utmost courtesy and pupils applied excellent understanding, demonstrating excellent progress in the lesson.

The increased number of qualified teachers and those with relevant experience is contributing to good subject knowledge, which helps improve the quality of the

teaching and pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned with appropriate tasks to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding. Extension work is usually provided for abler pupils and meets their needs, along with booster classes after school. The lesson planning builds effectively on pupils' prior learning and a variety of tasks are set to help pupils learn, so that they are engaged, collaborate well with each other, enjoy their learning and make good progress. Relationships are positive and encouraging. Some teachers use Islamic terms to praise pupils for their hard work and pupils value this praise. However, not all teachers are yet consistent in this practice. On occasion, pupils' exuberant behaviour is not well managed and they take time to settle to work. This reduces their progress in the lesson. Pupils' learning is well supported with good resources for computing and science to enable research and practical work. Lively displays can be seen in classrooms and around the school and are often informative, as well as celebrating pupils' work, although less so for the Islamic ethos of the school.

Pupils' progress is regularly assessed by teachers, meeting the requirement. Assessments are made in each subject through half-termly tests and attainment is still recorded using National Curriculum levels. The results are recorded on progress tracker sheets, to provide a useful overview of progress across the subjects for each class. Pupils sometimes record these levels in subject books with targets to be met by the end of the academic year. This system has the potential to be effective in raising standards. For example, in a science lesson, abler pupils were given the level criteria, so they had a clear idea of the level they are working at and what they needed to do to reach the next level. On occasion, some teachers set levels that may be unrealistic for some pupils to achieve over the year. The system is not fully complete as more data is still to be added including from end of Key Stage 2 assessments for pupils in Year 7. To mitigate this somewhat, the school sets an entry test and all pupils are assessed on the first half term's work to give some baseline information. Currently, the head of education does a useful analysis of the progress tracker sheets on a termly basis to plan any intervention needed. The next steps are to ensure that the assessment and recording system is completed, that it shows an individual pupil's progress over time, and that all teachers' assessments are accurate.

The school has a marking policy but this is not always operated consistently. While there is some good practice, for example in English and history, which shows pupils' work being carefully marked with encouraging comments and pointers for improvement, there are other examples where routine classwork is not marked regularly and the marking is cursory.

By the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results have improved over the past three years and for 2014 results, the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was in line with the national figure and the proportion gaining 5 or more A* to C grades was above the national figure. These results contribute to pupils being well prepared for the next stage of their education, as all go on to further education. They are confident and articulate British Muslim young women that understand the contribution they can make as citizens.

The learning support officer is working with subject teachers, and from assessment information, to effectively identify those pupils who may, for emotional or academic

reasons, or a disability, require additional help. Useful strategies are then put in place to help individuals in class, or for example through extra booster classes, and they make sound progress. All pupils are at least bi-lingual but all are fluent in English to access the curriculum. When pupils from other countries arrive their language needs are assessed and support is given should this be required. The next step is to ensure that the effectiveness of the support is more clearly monitored and progress recorded.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and all regulations are met. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Daily activities contribute to pupils' good spiritual development. Pupils participate in daily *salah* (obligatory prayers), which begins with the *azaan* (call to prayer), with confidence, respect and sincerity. *Duas* (supplications) are recited at the end and pupils have an opportunity for quiet reflection, which they take seriously. Lessons begin with *dua*, although at times this is done whilst pupils and staff are preparing for the start of the lesson, detracting somewhat from reflection. *Nasheeds* (Islamic songs) are used as an engaging tool to further deepen pupils' understanding of their faith. For example, pupils perform *nasheeds* as part of school assemblies and during the inspection pupils sang confidently a *nasheed* about the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The principal leads assemblies every Friday and encourages pupils to reflect on all aspects of their spiritual and moral development.

Pupils' moral development is good. The school encourages pupils to behave well and to act in a responsible manner. Pupils have to write reflections after any incident of unacceptable behaviour. This is an encouragement for pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. During the inspection, Year 9 pupils visited the Old Bailey and the staff and pupils received very positive comments about pupils' behaviour. The well-planned assembly programme, tutorials and Islamic studies make strong contributions to the pupils' moral development, helping them to understand the reasons for good behaviour and to differentiate between right and wrong actions. The school works hard to encourage good character. The pupils are welcoming, courteous and polite to visitors and have mutual respect for each other. Whole school assemblies are held twice a week and tutorials three times a week and these make a good contribution to pupils' moral development, through reflection and discussion.

Social development is good. Pupils work effectively with each other, positively encouraging each other during paired or group work. All pupils vote for their school council representative helping them to understand the idea of democracy and their rights and responsibilities as individuals in society. The active school council holds weekly meetings and during discussion with inspectors, pupils confirmed that their suggestions are carefully considered by staff.

The school is achieving one of its aims in cultivating in each pupil the understanding that every individual is a valued member of the school community. It is working hard to promote British values through topics in the curriculum, assembly themes and tutorial times. Pupils understand the democratic process first-hand. During the

inspection all year groups, including the sixth form, voted in the Tower Hamlets Young Mayor election. Pupils could explain clearly the reasons they would vote for a particular candidate having considered each manifesto, demonstrating a good understanding that people are given respect and are able to hold different views from their own.

Pupils have worked hard to raise funds for the school and those suffering poverty. During the inspection pupils contributed to a national food share programme. Pupils learn about the importance of sharing and giving to others through Islamic studies and the tutorial programme. The school makes use of the many museums in London, for example, pupils have visited amongst others, the Bank of England Museum, the Natural History Museum and the National Army Museum. This supports work in the class but also pupils' general knowledge and is broadening their horizons. Pupils have also visited a number of public services or through work experience have the opportunity to work within them. Amongst others, pupils have undertaken placements at local primary schools, libraries and pharmacies. In discussion with pupils, they show a very good knowledge of, and respect for, services and public institutions in England and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

Cultural development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of their own culture and a growing respect for other cultures. Pupils and staff come from a variety of different backgrounds and they display a strong sense of community spirit. Pupils are clearly respectful of their own faith but also respect that others can have their own beliefs. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils understand the importance of respecting all members of the local, national and international communities. Pupils say they would welcome more visitors into school and would also welcome opportunities to meet with those of other faiths or different traditions, for example with the opportunities to visit places of worship of other faiths. These additional enrichment activities would make a further contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Pupils at the school are well cared for and the pupils report that they are happy at school and feel safe. The school has appropriate policies in place for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, with effective day-to-day implementation to promote the well being of pupils. There is limited reference to the Islamic ethos of the school throughout the policies.

The safeguarding procedures and practice have regard for the government guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), April 2014'. The child protection and related policies, including dealing with allegations against staff, the staff code of conduct and discipline policy have been reviewed recently to reflect the guidance. Staff signed to say they received Part 1 of the safeguarding guidance. Staff have appropriate training according to their level of responsibility, such as designated safeguarding lead and deputy. The principal who sits on all recruitment panels has the required training and procedures are in place for appointing staff with regard to KCSIE. Staff files demonstrate that the required checks are made. In discussion with inspectors pupils could name a designated lead teacher for safeguarding, and

are confident to seek help from adults such as their tutor. Through lessons in citizenship and Islamic studies pupils have opportunities to discuss safeguarding matters. The school's e-safety policy and practice shows that the school is well aware of the need to keep pupils safe in this respect. Pupils are well versed in how to stay safe on the internet, for example through regular work in computing lessons. One pupil commented that they should be open with their parents about their on-line activity to help stay safe.

The leaders in the school are well aware of their responsibility to protect pupils from extremism and radicalisation. The policy states clearly that such activity is not part of the Islamic faith and values. It is set within the context of teaching about fundamental British values including through citizenship, Islamic Studies and assembly themes. In discussion, across the key stages pupils could name fundamental British values and many commented that they are taught to respect others, including those who may have different views from their own. In a Year 9 English lesson pupils discussed the topic of differences and respecting those who may have a disability. Visitors to the school are vetted and sign a declaration about not promoting partisan political views. This applies to school staff also.

Equipment is regularly maintained and serviced, and where appropriate, this is done by specialist companies. First aid procedures are well organised and consistently implemented. There are currently 12 teachers who have the appropriate training to ensure that there is always a first aider available on and off site.

Staff are conscientious in carrying out their duties, and some are relatively new to their responsibilities. Although regulatory requirements are met, it is recommended that there is more effective communication and coordination of records between those with responsibility across the various aspects of welfare, health and safety. This is so that all staff are fully aware of each other's roles and to make sure matters are not missed.

The behaviour of pupils is good and teachers create a safe, calm and orderly learning environment. There is an appropriate range of sanctions in place when the expectations of good behaviour are not met. Pupils are well supervised at all times, both on and off site with appropriate staffing.

Admissions and attendance registers are appropriately maintained. A significant minority of pupils are regularly late, but the school has suitable procedures in place to monitor and take action on this.

The school fulfils its responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and written policies are in place with regard to guidance, and implemented to ensure equal opportunity for all pupils, helping the school to achieve one of its aims. An appropriate accessibility plan, with timescales, is in place, which includes planned improvements to the site.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school is aware of its responsibility to ensure that it makes and records checks on the suitability of all staff. This responsibility is undertaken diligently by one of the

administrative staff. The single central record is kept electronically and was printed out for inspectors and meets requirements. Staff files are kept in order with copies of the necessary documentation on the checks made on staff.

Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school building is Grade II listed and was originally designed as a school and meets the needs of the school's current curriculum. The standard of the accommodation and the facilities are good. The school is generally well decorated and the accommodation is well maintained with a high standard of cleanliness and tidiness and it used during the evening by community groups. Pupils' work is celebrated in displays all around the school, which helps to create a bright, stimulating and attractive learning environment. The science laboratory is large and suitably equipped, as is the computing room. All classrooms are spacious, well organised and have good ventilation, lighting and heating. The premises ensure that good attention is given to the pupils' safety. Adequate facilities are available for pupils to shower after PE. The outside area is small, but provides the opportunity for outside PE with a safe and well-maintained playground surface. The small outside space is compensated for by a large hall area on each of the three floors of the building. The lunch break is short and pupils do not have much opportunity to use the outside facilities during the school day.

Provision of information

The school provides a detailed prospectus for new parents, which includes relevant information about the school aims, mission and values, and the curriculum offered. From the website, it is clear that policies such as child protection, admissions and behaviour are available, should parents wish to see them. The school website is a new addition since the last inspection but it is not used sufficiently as a full source of information for parents and prospective parents. Although regulatory requirements are met, the website does not, for example provide information about the range of activities in which pupils are involved.

Regular letters home provide up-to-date information about the school. The annual newsletter provides a summary of events and achievements. Parent evenings are held twice a year and parents receive one progress report and an annual detailed report each year. Parents of Year 7 pupils receive a settling in report in the autumn term so parents are helpfully made aware of any concerns at an early stage. These provide up-to-date information about curriculum coverage, progression and next targets. Some comments do not give precise details of the individual pupil's strengths and areas for development in a particular subject.

Workshops on various issues have been led by the head teacher and provide useful support for parents. For example, a helpful workshop was held on effective ways to support pupils during the examination period. The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires are supportive of the school, the ethos and the education provided for their daughters.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets all the regulations for registration and there have been no formal complaints during the previous academic year, 2013 -2014.

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 broadly meets the expectations of AMSUK but in order to strengthen its religious ethos the school should consider

- integrating the Islamic dimension in written plans and policies of secular subjects
- integrating the Islamic vision and values more into school displays.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- completing the assessment and recording systems, improving the quality of target setting and more consistently applying the marking policy across the school
- reviewing the recording and communication aspects of welfare, health and safety to have a more coordinated approach across the school
- ensuring that action is taken by the school's leaders to sustain the improvements that have taken place.