



# New Horizon Community School

## Inspection report

This inspection was carried out under section 162 (A) of the Education Act 2002 as amended. 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:** 383/6119  
**Association:** AMSUK  
**Date of inspection:** 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> March 2013  
**Lead Inspector:** Mrs C Broomhead  
**Team inspectors:** Mrs H Varachia  
Miss F Norcross

**Age range of pupils:** 11-16 years  
**Number on roll:** 93  
**Full-time:** 93 girls  
**Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:** 0

**Proprietor:** Mr T Mahmood  
**Head teacher:** Ms S Ahmad  
**Address of school:** Newton Hill House  
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Leeds  
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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**

The New Horizon Community School is a non-selective, independent Islamic school for girls aged 11 to 16 years. Around two thirds of pupils come from central and northern Leeds and others travel from further afield in West Yorkshire. Just over a quarter of pupils live in homes where English is not their principal language. A small number of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. As a faith-based school, it aims to create an atmosphere that encourages respect between all members of its community, to reflect the values the school adheres to, and to support its pupils in their pursuit of knowledge and life. The school was last inspected by BSI in January 2010.

## **Evaluation of the school**

The school is successful in creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding between all members of its community. It is also very successful in encouraging its pupils to value education and to develop understanding and compassion for the needs of others. The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. The curriculum is satisfactory at present; it was stronger at the last inspection because of the extensive enrichment activities pupils experienced, these are now more limited. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. Teaching seen during the inspection was generally good and this promotes a positive attitude to learning. The pupils are polite and courteous and their behaviour is good; they enjoy school and make satisfactory progress. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate because the school has failed to follow safeguarding procedures as rigorously as is required and to fully implement its fire safety policy. Whilst the day-to-day care and supervision of pupils is generally good, and parents say their children feel safe and are well cared for, not enough attention has been paid to ensuring the school meets its statutory safeguarding duties.

Governors have made significant improvements to the school premises and facilities since the last inspection and pupils now benefit from good quality information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. However, the school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection, including two head teachers and changes to the teaching staff. As a result there has been a period of instability and some aspects of provision have fallen behind the good standards seen at the last inspection. The proprietor and governors have not kept a close enough check on the school's work and have not ensured that their vision and aims are communicated clearly to parents and those in the wider community. Neither has there been sufficient monitoring by the governing body; as a consequence, the school does not meet all of the independent schools' regulations.

## Quality of education provided

The curriculum is satisfactory. It was good at the last inspection, but some aspects which were considered particularly strong, such as enterprise, work-related learning, and links with colleges and universities are now limited.

The curriculum provides all pupils with a satisfactory range of subjects and is broadly based on the National Curriculum, including religious studies and citizenship. At Key Stage 4 pupils study for GCSE in English, mathematics, science, ICT, Urdu, religious education, history and humanities. They also have opportunity to study additional sciences at GCSE. Entry level courses are studied in English and mathematics, as well as a short course in English language, which is accredited by Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) as is a short course on citizenship. Appropriate amounts of time are allocated to subjects so that pupils can study in sufficient breadth and depth. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and most provide a good framework from which teachers can plan their lessons. Teachers bring a good range of specialist expertise to the curriculum and this has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Art has been introduced recently and pupils are really enjoying this practical subject which enables them to develop their creativity.

Attention is given to improving pupils' literacy skills in English lessons and to a lesser extent in other subjects. However, there is no whole school approach to teaching literacy. This is important because pupils are taught in mixed-ability classes and there is a wide variation in the level of literacy skills in some classes. There is no whole school approach to planning provision for pupils who have English as an additional language, or to identifying those who may have additional learning needs.

The Islamic studies curriculum covers some specialist areas including Qur'anic studies, *tajweed* (rules of recitation) and *Seerah* (life of the Prophet). However, a number of disciplines are not covered so pupils' knowledge and spiritual development are limited. Key Islamic principles are not interwoven sufficiently throughout the whole curriculum. In religious studies pupils cover a range of world religions but some topics taught do not have any written planning.

Personal, social and health education contributes significantly to pupils' growing maturity and self-confidence as seen in lessons, in discussions with pupils and in relationships between pupils. It is taught in science and physical education (PE), for instance where pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and keeping themselves safe, and through humanities, English, citizenship and religious education. A particular strength of the curriculum is how well it promotes pupils' awareness of the needs of others, including in other countries and encourages a genuine concern and empathy for other people.

As pupils move into Key Stage 4 they are given opportunities to consider their future careers and what options may be open to them. They attend careers fairs, learn to prepare personal statements, and use the internet to research further and higher education options. In Year 10 they take part in work experience placements, chosen by the pupils themselves. As pupils go into Year 11, individual guidance is given when they are making decisions about what they want to do when they leave school.

Significant improvements have been made to resources and specialist equipment since the last inspection. For instance, pupils now have access to a well-equipped ICT suite and there are good quality ICT facilities in most classrooms.

Opportunities for visits to places of interest have become more limited in recent years and the school is aware that this aspect of the curriculum is in need of development so that the exciting range of enrichment activities which pupils enjoyed at the time of the last inspection can be reintroduced.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Teaching seen in lessons was generally good, with some outstanding features and other aspects which were no better than satisfactory. As a result, pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning. By the end of Year 11, most pupils achieve GCSE grades in line with their abilities. Some current Year 11 pupils are studying courses at entry level, for instance in science and mathematics.

Lesson planning is good and makes clear the objectives, activities and resources for each lesson. Some plans include brief information about pupils' individual needs and the adaptations made to support them. However, planning is not specific enough about provision and support for those pupils of below average ability or those who have gaps in their learning or a limited competence in English. Teachers have recognised this as an area for development and are beginning to address it. A qualified teaching assistant has been appointed and is beginning to provide specific support for individual pupils. There is very little evidence of individual learning targets being set for and with pupils.

Teachers' specialist subject knowledge is used well to promote an enjoyment of learning. Teachers generate an interest and enthusiasm for learning. They set clear expectations for behaviour in lessons and most pupils respond appropriately. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are positive, supportive and encouraging. Pupils take pride in their work, as seen in the neatness of their handwriting and care taken in presenting their work. However, pupils do not pay enough attention to proof-reading their work to eliminate spelling errors, even when asked to do so by teachers; this happens across the school. Teachers are skilled at questioning pupils to check what they have learned, although some could probe understanding further. Lessons usually progress at a good pace.

Some lessons are too teacher-directed so that there are too few opportunities for pupils to discuss, debate and share ideas. This limits their active involvement in lessons. When given the opportunity, pupils demonstrate confidence and capacity to offer ideas, behave sensibly, use imagination and creativity, and research and present their own ideas in sensible ways. Some pupils are quite shy and reluctant to speak out in some lessons, but when asked to work in pairs or small groups in other lessons, they were seen to blossom. This is something the school could encourage further in practice.

Assessment is very variable. Systems have changed over the past two years due to staff changes and the school is at an early stage of introducing whole school approaches to assessing pupils' learning and tracking their progress. There is little evidence of teachers' assessments being moderated to check their reliability and

accuracy, except at Key Stage 4 where this is undertaken by external examination boards. There is some uncertainty amongst staff about National Curriculum attainment levels and how these relate to potential achievement at the end of Year 11. As a result, teachers' expectations are too low for some pupils. The school had difficulty providing information for inspectors about pupils' attainment and progress over time. Data is not collated into a format which would enable staff to be certain that pupils are being challenged to progress and achieve as well as they could from their starting points. The quality of marking is also very variable. Some marking consists of simple ticks or comments such as 'good, well done'. There is little evidence of teachers writing constructive comments which help pupils to know what they need to do to improve.

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

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall with good elements.

Pupils are taught elements of the Islamic faith to promote their spiritual development. They begin and end all lessons with the recitation of *duas* (supplication). However, not all pupils do so respectfully and teachers do not always lead by example. The school's displays make a good contribution to the understanding of key Islamic ideas but much of this encouragement is restricted in the main to the Islamic studies department only. The school encourages all pupils to take part in *zuhr salah* (lunchtime prayers), and during these spiritual moments pupils are encouraged to be quiet and respectful. However, pupils require further guidance on performing *salah* in congregation because they are unsure of what is expected of them. The Islamic perspective forms part of very few lessons. In a good Year 8 PE lesson pupils were reminded of the importance of *bismillah* (in the name of Allah) when doing an action. In a citizenship lesson, pupils learnt the Islamic value of volunteering for good causes. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to extend their understanding of an Islamic perspective across the curriculum because this is not systematically included in subject planning. Pupils would benefit from a broader programme covering more aspects of Islamic studies including the delivery of *fiqh*, (Islamic Jurisprudence), *salah* (prayers) and *aqaa'id* (Islamic belief).

Pupils develop self-confidence, for example by leading assemblies on topics such as giving charity to those less fortunate. All assemblies are prepared by the pupils and support for them in doing this is currently limited. Guidance would help the younger pupils to grasp the key Islamic ideas being shared. Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is good. The school has worked hard to encourage the development of good character. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning although attendance for some is a concern. They are respectful to each other and their teachers and they feel that they are well cared for. Their growing maturity is clearly demonstrated in their role as school council representatives. These pupils also take on the role of mentors for younger pupils. Both opportunities help to inculcate a sense of duty and responsibility to work for the benefit of others. Pupils take their role as form prefects seriously. In order to be even more effective, pupils would benefit from some training for their roles including on the peer mentoring programme.

Pupils' moral development is good. They have an increasing understanding of right and wrong. Recently, pupils led an assembly during anti-bullying week and there are considerable reminders around the school. In discussions with inspectors, pupils reported that bullying is virtually non-existent. Each week, one pupil is rewarded in assembly and named 'pupil of the week' and merit certificates are given.

Social development is good. Pupils work effectively with each other in pairs or groups. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, the most able pupils supported their peers during group work with maturity and sensitivity. All pupils vote for the school council representative, contributing to their understanding of democracy and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. In assemblies pupils present balanced arguments, showing the importance of respecting different opinions. Year 10 pupils have also written to their local MP sharing their concerns about the need for education for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils have visited the local library and last year the Houses of Parliament. A visit to the local museum is also planned so demonstrating an understanding of public institutions and services in England. The pupils have worked hard to raise funds for local, national and international causes. Pupils and staff clearly demonstrate concern and compassion for others who are in need.

Cultural development is generally good. Although pupils study the various world religions at Key Stage 3, they now have fewer opportunities than at the previous inspection to develop their understanding of communities beyond their own. There has been one visit to a local church and selected pupils took part in a 'Faith in Each Other' event organised by the Leeds Faith Forum. Pupils would benefit from further links with other faith groups and enrichment activities of this nature to make a significant contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils say they would welcome such opportunities.

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

Whilst the day-to-day care and supervision of pupils is good, the school has not dealt with all of the requirements in this section with sufficient rigour and therefore provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate.

Pupils behave well and are respectful and caring of each other, staff and visitors. They report that they feel secure within the school environment. The school has effective systems in place for recording sanctions for misbehaviour. There is a robust approach to anti-bullying and a peer mentoring system helps the younger pupils to settle and become established at the school very quickly. The pupils know who to speak to should they have any concerns to do with safeguarding. However, other requirements for pupils' welfare and safety are not in place. The designated child protection officer is not a senior member of staff and this must be rectified urgently. Not all the required recruitment checks have been completed before staff start work in the school. The school's recruitment procedures do not have sufficient regard for national guidance, for example written references have not been taken up for all those employed.

Senior leaders have recently given a great deal of attention to issues concerning fire safety and have sought advice from the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services.

This advice still needs to be fully implemented, for the school to meet the regulations, particularly with regard to the training of fire officers and the regular practices for checking fire procedures and equipment. The school's procedures for completing daily attendance registers do not meet the required standards, as the registers are not totalled and an appropriate coding system is not used to explain the reasons for absence. The school was unable to give inspectors attendance figures for the past three years. The school does not have procedures to keep the local authority informed if a pupil fails to attend regularly or absences of more than ten days that are unexplained.

The school has a clear first aid policy in place and the stated procedures are adhered to. Recent improvements to the first aid room mean that the school meets this aspect of the regulations. The school also has a three year accessibility plan and fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

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

The school does not implement its staff recruitment procedures with sufficient rigour, particularly when there are staff vacancies which the school needs to fill quickly. As a result, there are instances of staff starting work at the school without the required checks having been completed. In particular, written references are not always taken up prior to appointment. Also, governors and senior staff do not have a clear understanding when criminal records bureau (CRB) checks from a previous employment can be transferred to a new job at the school. As a result, staff do not always have a valid criminal record check in place when they start work at the school. This poor recruitment practice constitutes a failure to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure and contributes to the overall judgement that welfare, health and safety is inadequate.

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

Governors have made a significant investment in improving the buildings and physical environment since the last inspection. A new classroom block has been built which includes a high quality ICT room and larger classrooms. Some of the previous classrooms are still cramped, particularly those used for science and art. The standard of maintenance and decoration is generally acceptable, and is good in the new part of the building. The school uses a nearby field for PE and games and this is a good facility. The school does not have the required shower facilities for pupils to use after PE. The school does not have external lighting, including for the fire exit so that entry to, and exit from the premises can be done safely.

### **Provision of information**

The school communicates fairly regularly with parents through letters, telephone calls and pupils' diaries. It has recently established its website and parents are beginning to use this. The prospectus is an attractive document which promotes the school well, although it is not as explicit about sharing the school's Islamic aims and values to prospective parents and the wider community.

The school does not meet a number of regulations because the required information is not available, or parents and prospective parents have not been informed about what is available and how it can be requested. For instance, the school does not give the name of the head teacher and the name of the chair of governors in either its prospectus or on the website. Also, the school does not publish, as is required, the safeguarding policy on the school's website.

Some of the school's policies are out of date or inaccurate. The governors must ensure that all school policies are reviewed regularly so that they are kept up-to-date, are in line with the school's ethos and vision and are made readily available to parents and prospective parents. Parents should be informed that these are available and how they can access them.

Parents are generally supportive of the school. Quite a proportion of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire do not feel that they are treated as partners in their child's education and upbringing in faith.

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

The school's procedures for complaints meet requirements. There have been no formal complaints in the past twelve months.

### **Compliance with the regulations**

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

In order to meet fully the regulations in **part 3**, welfare, health and safety of pupils, the school must:

- as a matter of urgency, ensure that safeguarding arrangements and staff recruitment procedures have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (Regulation 7)
- ensure the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (Regulation 13)
- ensure attendance registers are completed correctly and that procedures are put in place to inform the local authority, if necessary in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Regulation 17)

In order to meet fully the regulations in **part 4**, suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, the school must:

- undertake the required checks to ensure that no member of staff is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Regulation 19(2)(a))
- for all appointments since 1 September 2003, ensure that an enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) check has been made in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school (Regulation 19(2)(c)).

In order to meet fully the regulations in **part 5**, premises of and accommodation at schools, the school must:



- ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (23A(1)(c))
- ensure that external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises (Regulation 23E(b)).

In order to meet fully the regulations in **part 6**, provision of information, the school must:

- ensure the name of the head teacher and the name of the chair of the governing body is provided to parents of pupils, parents of prospective pupils and others on request (Regulations 24(2)a and 24(2)(b))
- provide parents of pupils, parents of prospective pupils and others on request with a statement of the school's ethos (including religious ethos) and aims (Regulation 24(2)(d))
- make available to parents of pupils, parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to others:
  - particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for discipline and exclusions (Regulation 24(3)(a))
  - particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (Regulation 24(3)(b))
  - particulars of policies relating to bullying, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving as required under part 3, paragraph 9 (Regulation 24(3)(d))
  - particulars of the arrangements for tackling bullying, and for promoting pupils' health and safety on the school premises and on educational visits as required under part 3 paragraphs 10 and 11(Regulation 24(3)(e))
  - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (Regulation 24(3)(f))
  - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (Regulation 24(3)(g))
  - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (Regulation 24(3)(h)).
- the school should publish on its website, the particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils, as required by paragraph 7 of the Regulations ( Regulation 24(1)(c)).

### **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:

- developing the ways in which the Islamic aims and values of the school are made clear to parents, prospective parents and others

- reviewing the curriculum and integrating more formally the Islamic perspective into all subjects and policies
- providing opportunities to train staff to teach the curriculum from an Islamic perspective
- involving parents in the spiritual life of the school and nurturing of pupils' faith.

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

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

- ensuring that all governors and senior leaders have a clear understanding of regulatory requirements and check the school's work regularly to ensure that these are being met
- improving the quality of assessment so that teachers can track pupils' attainment and progress and be certain that pupils are being challenged to achieve their potential
- reviewing the quality of marking so that pupils are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.