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11 July 2014

Mr Hamid Patel
Principal
Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School and Sixth-Form College
Preston New Road
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB2 7AD

Dear Mr Patel

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School and Sixth Form College

Following my visit with Charles Lowry, Her Majesty's Inspector, Anne Seneviratne, Her Majesty's Inspector and David Selby, Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 8 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Secretary of State for Education raised concerns with the Chief Inspector about the effectiveness of safeguarding and leadership and management at the school.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with the Principal, senior leaders, teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. During the course of the inspection, inspectors spoke with and gathered the views and opinions of over 60 students across a range of year groups, including the sixth form. They looked at minutes of meetings of the governing body, the governors' Register of Interests, the Principal's reports to governors, alongside other key policies. Her Majesty's Inspectors visited classrooms to speak with students and review their work. Inspectors visited all public areas of the school and scrutinised display boards. A sample of students' work in citizenship was also reviewed.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School and Sixth-Form College opened as an independent school in 1982; it acquired voluntary aided status in 2005. All teachers have qualified teacher status (QTS), or are working towards it. The school is on track to convert to become an academy in autumn 2014. The Tauheedul Group appoints foundation governors to the school. The trust's mission is to present a progressive, outwardly focused view of Muslim faith and culture and to improve shared understanding between people of different faiths and no faith.

This school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school, with 749 students on roll, of which 164 are in the sixth form. Demand for places is high and the school is oversubscribed. All students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, around 70% are of Indian heritage and 26% of Pakistani heritage. Almost all students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional funding the school receives for students known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care. The proportion of students with special educational needs who are supported at school action is higher than average. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The proportion of students who join the school at times other than in Year 7 is very low.

Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School and Sixth Form College is a National Support School and the Principal is a National Leader of Education. The school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2014 and was judged to be outstanding in all aspects of its work. The school's overall effectiveness has been judged outstanding on three successive occasions. In 2013, 96% of students achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C with English and mathematics.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Tawheed, the Islamic concept of 'oneness', is evident throughout the school. Students demonstrate this principle in the care and consideration they show for each other, which results in them feeling safe and secure at school. Many of them explained to inspectors that they feel part of 'one big Tauheedul family'. This strong sense of benevolence is also evident in the charitable work that students undertake to support others in Muslim and non-Muslim communities who are less fortunate than themselves. In 2013, students raised in excess of £30,000 for the various charities they support.

Teachers have been well trained in the 'Prevent' strategy, the government's programme for tackling extremism. They draw on a range of resources and activities

to raise students' awareness of the risks of extremism and radicalisation. E-safety is prominent throughout the school and is promoted well to both staff and students. Consequently, students are able to articulate clearly what constitutes a potential risk to their safety and they know what steps to take in order to report concerns or seek help and advice.

This is an outward-facing school where students are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and for adult life in Britain. Bullying is rare because students genuinely respect and value individual differences. No students have been excluded from the school in the last three years; attendance rates are exceptionally high. Academic expectations are also high and this results in outstanding achievement and impressive rates of progression into higher education. Students who met with Her Majesty's Inspectors confirmed that they were proud to wear their uniform. The hijab is part of the school uniform but it is not obligatory; this is clearly stated in the school's uniform policy. In the past it was suggested that students may wish to consider wearing their hijab out of school as part of their spiritual growth; however, this suggestion has long since been removed from school documentation, nor is it an expectation.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Leaders successfully embed the school's ethos of faith, excellence and service across all aspects of school life. Safety is at the forefront of decision making. Senior leaders are not complacent in relation to safeguarding and seek to improve procedures wherever possible. For example, the school's process for vetting external speakers has been reviewed and now includes a full and thorough check on any individual who is invited in to address students. Due diligence checks are made which include scans of social media to identify whether the guest has previously made any statements that may contradict British values. Her Majesty's Inspectors are satisfied that appropriate checks have been made to ensure that students are not confronted with ideals that could pose a risk to their safety and well-being.

The school's curriculum allows for high achievement and also provides a rich and broad education that prepares students well to contribute to British society. Key values that promote democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are threaded throughout both the academic and enrichment elements of the school's curriculum. Students speak with excitement about the topics covered in their life-skills lessons. This enthusiasm translates into a 99% A* to C pass rate in GCSE citizenship.

Governance is strong and transparent. Governors have agreed a number of targets for the school that are aimed to promote community cohesion both within the school and beyond. As a consequence of the drive to achieve these targets, students have a well-developed understanding of and empathy for different faiths and cultures.

Student voice is a key force in the school and is valued by senior leaders as a means of checking on the impact of actions they have taken or to inform change. The fact that students have a voice within the school and that they are empowered by their learning helps them to become resilient, articulate young people, able to stand up to external pressures that may seek to radicalise them. Senior leaders constantly seek out ways to promote activities and events that challenge religious, political and racial extremism.

External support

Relationships with the local authority are strong. The school plays a leading part in supporting school improvement in the locality. The school is a lead partner in the North West Leadership Partnership. This is a licensed provider of professional development programmes for the National College for Teaching and Leadership.

Her Majesty's Inspectors did not identify any significant priorities for further improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Vincent Ashworth
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc Chair of the Governing Body