

Inspection of Excellence Girls Academy

Crowther Street, Shelton, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2ER

Inspection dates:	6 to 8 July 2021
Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve well at Excellence Girls Academy. They are provided with a broad academic curriculum and are expected to work hard. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations for behaviour.

The rules are fair and bullying of any sort is rare. Pupils are studious in lessons but enjoy lively games on the playground. They are confident to voice their opinions and enjoy discussion and debate. Through the school council they have a say in arranging school events. Staff are attentive to pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). They ensure pupils learn about life beyond school, being responsible and respecting others.

Staff make sure that pupils study the subjects they need in order to follow their dreams and ambitions. The in-school 'house' teams, named after influential Muslim women, also help to inspire pupils to do their best.

There is plenty of space in the building. It is kept secure and pupils are well supervised and safe.

Parents and pupils say many positive things about the school. Looking to the future, leaders aim to offer more extra-curricular activities. There is also scope to increase and improve the school's reading books and refine planning in English.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils are taught well and enjoy success in a range of subjects. Teachers are well informed about the subjects they teach and the school's curriculum plans are well organised. In mathematics, religious education and science, planning and classroom activities ensure that pupils learn the right knowledge in the right order. Regular practice and recall activities reinforce earlier learning and enable teachers to check what pupils have remembered. Consequently, pupils learn a lot. In English, they also achieve well and are encouraged to read widely and often. That said, the school's curriculum plans in this subject could be strengthened. Currently, there are lots of different English plans and what pupils actually need to learn could be made clearer, both on paper and in class.

Pupils read regularly, both across the curriculum and for pleasure. Around the school, there are several displays that promote different books and increase pupils' awareness of different authors. However, the school library is not well stocked with appropriate books for the age range of pupils in the school.

Staff are able to provide effective support to any pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. Indeed, support for all abilities currently in the school presents a positive picture. Looking ahead, staff will need to keep this under review if pupils' needs change as the school grows.

The school is a calm and orderly place in which to work and learn. Pupils' behaviour in class is usually excellent. Pupils listen to their teachers and get on with their work. They want to do well and work hard. Pupils and staff say that bullying is not a problem and would be stopped if it happened. Some pupils do say unkind things to others at times. Staff are alert to this and talk to pupils to help them learn from their mistakes.

In a similar vein, staff make sure pupils learn the difference between right and wrong. They have ambitions for pupils to grow into responsible people who have the confidence and education to make the most of life and their opportunities. The proprietors and school leaders articulate this aspiration with eloquence. They also keep a close eye on what is happening in school. They have routines in place to check on the quality of education and pupils' safety. In doing this, they also ensure that the independent standards remain met.

The school offers a good-quality PSHE programme. Pupils learn about British values and show interest in and respect for other people, religions and cultures. They enjoy discussion and can talk about the dangers of ignorance and prejudice. During this inspection, members of the school council presented their views confidently. Furthermore, some pupils arranged to interview the inspector in order to write an article for the school newspaper.

The school runs a study club and leaders plan to offer more after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities. The pandemic has delayed plans to strengthen links with

employers and colleges. However, staff do provide pupils with advice about future careers and education choices, and pupils value this. Pupils who have recently left gained the qualifications they needed to follow their chosen paths.

Most pupils attend regularly. Most arrive on time, but a few are often late and miss the start of lessons. School leaders keep a close check on this and remind parents and pupils about the importance of punctuality.

The proprietor has ensured that the school's required policies and procedures are in place and operate as they should. The school meets all of the independent school standards. All the required information for parents is available on the school's website and the complaints policy is fit for purpose. Leaders also make regular checks on the school building. They also make sure the school's accessibility plan is being implemented.

All the parents who entered written responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire reported that they were very pleased with their children's education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff keep up to date with safeguarding guidance. They have sought and acted on advice and are well informed about potential risks in the local area. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in different situations. The school site is secure and all the correct checks on staff and visitors are carried out and recorded properly. The school's safeguarding policy and other related information are available on the school's well-maintained website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Current planning for English sets out what pupils will do but does not identify what they need to know. These curriculum plans should be strengthened by including more information about the crucial knowledge that pupils need to learn.
- Teachers promote a love of reading and encourage pupils to read widely. However, the school does not have many reading books. Leaders should review the stock of reading books so that pupils have a wider choice of appropriate books.
- Leaders' plans to offer more extra-curricular activities and improve careers guidance have been delayed by the pandemic. Looking to the future, leaders should increase and improve these aspects as soon as is practically possible.

- Pupils attend regularly but a few are late too often. This means they miss the start of lessons. The school's leaders should work with parents to make sure all pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of punctuality.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	147236
DfE registration number	861/6018
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10193310
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent Muslim faith school
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Excellence Academy Girls School Ltd
Chair	Nasik Haroon and Mohammad Ummar Azam
Headteacher	Samia Haroon
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,500
Telephone number	01782 390807
Website	www.excellencegirlsacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@excellencegirlsacademy.co.uk

Information about this school

- This was the school's first standard inspection. It was registered by the Department for Education and opened on 30 August 2019.
- This independent Muslim faith school is located in a former primary school in the Shelton area of Stoke-on-Trent. It does not use any alternative provision.
- The school aims to provide a caring and secure Islamic environment, enriched with the values of discipline, aspiration, respect and teamwork, which extends beyond the school into the wider community. It aims to provide Muslim children with a high standard of education based on the national curriculum, in addition to teaching Islamic studies, Arabic and Urdu.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, subject leaders, staff and pupils. He also met and spoke with the proprietors.
- The inspector examined school policies and curriculum plans. In addition, he looked at records relating to governance, pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development. Before the inspection, he looked at information on the school's website.
- The inspector considered the 12 responses to Ofsted's parent survey, including 12 free-text responses. He also considered the 14 responses to the staff survey.
- The inspection focused carefully on English, mathematics, science, religious education and PSHE. The inspector also considered evidence about other subjects. He visited lessons, looked at teachers' plans and pupils' work, and met with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector examined information about safeguarding and met with the lead member of staff for safeguarding.
- The inspector checked all areas of the school premises for compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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