

# Eden Girls' School Waltham Forest

Silver Birch House, Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow E17 5SD

## Inspection dates

26–27 April 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher's excellent leadership and high expectations have led to the school developing and sustaining outstanding practice since it opened in 2014.
- Leaders, including the trust, have helped the local community to realise its dream – to create a school where pupils are nurtured and inspired to become tomorrow's leaders.
- Other senior leaders and managers provide very good support. Staff do whatever it takes to ensure that pupils achieve well, academically and socially. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of work and behaviour.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have created a school where pupils are happy and confident about their safety. Pupils thrive well.
- Teaching across the school is of a high standard. This is a result of the excellent training and development, which enables teachers to sharpen their skills. As a result, staff morale is high.
- Work in pupils' books and validated assessments shows that pupils make rapid progress from different starting points. This is significantly above national averages in all subjects.
- The school's systems for assessing and tracking pupils' rates of progress are exemplary. Leaders use data and external validation relentlessly to verify pupils' progress.
- The progress of the most able pupils is outstanding. These pupils rise to the challenges of early entry in religious education, information and communication technology (ICT) and to studying GCSE Arabic within a short time.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve significantly above average.
- Behaviour is impeccable. As 'go getters', pupils are disciplined and keen to learn; so their attendance is consistently high. They uphold strong moral values and are polite and respectful to each other, staff and visitors.
- The curriculum is well structured with an emphasis on the EBacc subjects. It provides openings for pupils to pursue alternative courses and interests. Drama and other subjects are still to be introduced. Opportunities abound for pupils to explore and develop leadership skills.
- Parents express a high level of satisfaction with the school's work and commitment to pupils. Leaders' alertness to safeguarding concerns means that pupils are safe from harm. Leaders and staff are responsive to pupils' needs.
- The governing body and the trust provide the expertise and high levels of challenge and support to ensure that leaders are strongly held to account for pupils' progress.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that, as expansion takes place, leaders at all levels maintain a sharp focus on sustaining the excellent systems in place by:
  - developing teaching and learning even further to ensure that pupils achieve outstanding progress
  - extending the curriculum to include other subjects, such as drama, technology and music.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**outstanding**

- The headteacher and other senior leaders, including the trust and governors, have high expectations of pupils. They do their utmost to achieve excellence in all areas of the school's work. As a result, the school's motto, 'Nurturing today's young people, improving tomorrow's leaders', underpins all that the school does. Leaders have created a culture in which pupils can succeed academically and socially.
- The strong leadership from the Tauheedul Education Trust permeates all levels of management. The school is extremely well led and managed; all leaders have a very good understanding of the school's work. This has enabled them to focus on the key priorities, identify potential barriers and intervene quickly. For example, leaders have skilfully worked with parents and won their trust in relation to covering topics on safeguarding, previously considered as taboos. This has led to parents accepting the safeguarding curriculum as fundamental to their children's education.
- The school is outstanding and strongly committed to moving forward because well-planned systems are in place. These ensure that leaders are relentless in their focus on maintaining well above-average progress that leads to high standards.
- Leaders set targets that are well above the national averages in all subjects for pupils to achieve. Leaders use exemplary assessment systems to track pupils' progress and their attainment rigorously and regularly. This enables leaders to have a good handle on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. Teachers' good tracking and assessment of pupils' progress over time is particularly effective. It enables teachers to manage, analyse and interpret data, so that the achievements of pupils are identified and support is given where needed. This contributes to all groups having an equal opportunity to achieve very well.
- Systems for assessing teachers' performance are rigorous. Senior leaders set ambitious targets and link them to the school's priorities. This enables them to hold all members of staff regularly to account for pupils' progress and other responsibilities that they hold. Additionally, leaders' ability to identify teaching that does not meet the high standards, and take swift and decisive action, is a further reason why pupils make rapid progress. There is no compromise.
- The leadership of teaching is a strength of the school's work. Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and provide feedback and opportunities for teachers to refine and develop their skills. Teachers are responsive to carrying out research and sharing their skills, especially as they are linked to the trust's development and individual needs.
- Newly qualified teachers said that the mentoring and support is of high quality; it enables them to plan well, and meet the needs of pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and provides both depth and balance. Leaders use the Tauheedul model, which emphasises the English Baccalaureate subjects. Senior leaders use their autonomy to include a range of other subjects. At this stage, the school does not offer all subjects within the creative and performance arts. However, senior leaders have responded positively to pupils' requests for subjects such as drama and design

and technology in the timetable. Plans are in place to introduce drama as a discrete subject next academic year, and leaders intend to introduce more subjects as the school expands. Pupils derive many benefits from the wide range of enrichment activities within and outside school. They were keen to talk about the targeted and self-selection enrichment programmes that staff organise to help pupils improve, for example, the leadership development programme, which emphasises 'civic leadership'. Participation in after-school activities, including physical education is high.

- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' faith systems lead to their participating in worship at the start of lessons and demonstrating respect and understanding of the doctrinal values of other faiths studied. The leadership programme increases pupils' understanding of giving and serving others. This is evident in their participation in fundraising and other charitable events. Pupils demonstrate very good understanding of moral principles and social skills in their interaction with others.
- Themes and topics covered in the curriculum, particularly in personal, social and health education, assemblies and citizenship have led to pupils being insightful about what it means to uphold British values. As thoughtful and responsive young people, they described the defined values, as 'universal'. Pupils live diversity, and embrace talks delivered from external and high-profile visitors. They are exceptionally well prepared to live and serve in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders ensure that the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is linked effectively to the assessed needs of pupils. Leaders monitor this accordingly, with a focus on evaluating the impact of strategies used. Current progress assessment information indicates that the special needs provision is helping pupils to make better progress than other pupils nationally.
- The school is thorough in its use of the pupil premium funding to provide very good support and different strategies to develop pupils' learning. These enable pupils to make exceptionally rapid progress to attain the high targets set.

## **Governance of the school**

- The local governing body has an exceptionally thorough understanding of the school and communities that it serves. Governors are highly skilled and use their expertise and experience to serve the school very well.
- As experts, different governors take responsibility for specific areas of the school's work, such as safeguarding and project management. Strategic management is extremely good, particularly as there are rigour and challenge when they review the school's work. This is evident in governors' knowledge about and questioning of the school's effectiveness in relation to, for example, safeguarding, the pupil premium funding and its impact, and staff appraisal.
- Governors serve and represent the local communities efficiently. They meet regularly with parents and act as supportive and critical friends of the school's work. The very good partnership work and communication that the school has with community leaders are benchmarks of the understanding and trust between all parties. For example, the school takes a protective stance when pursuing safeguarding concerns. It has a very good understanding of vulnerabilities in the community. Governors make excellent use

of the expert trainer on safeguarding to ensure that pupils know how to protect themselves. Governors ensure that all national priorities are thoroughly covered. They ensure that the school fulfils all statutory duties.

- Governors work closely with the trust, and thereby ensure that senior leaders meet the high standards that have been set. They monitor the school's work regularly and use externally validated reports as references when checking the accuracy of senior leaders' evaluations. They take a tough stance and do not settle for anything less than the best.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has well-developed safeguarding systems in place to secure the well-being of pupils. Procedures related to pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff are extremely thorough as is the organisation of all checks and files in relation to pupils and staff.
- Senior leaders and the governing body, including the strategic body, ensure that staff are up to date with changes and priorities nationally, regionally and locally. Training is thorough and continuous; there is attention to detail. The strategic direction from the trust and the governing body leads to senior leaders drawing on experts within the governing body and renowned national consultants and local trainers. They cover topics such as the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, gangs and drugs. The expertise used has made a difference. Pupils said that they have been enlightened and understand the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- The school's work with external agencies is very good. Staff are vigilant, and referrals are timely. Senior leaders make very good use of the assessment criteria system when making a referral. This ensures that pupils and families can access the right early help and support needed, linked to the concerns identified.
- The school curriculum on safeguarding is thorough and ensures that pupils are familiar with how to stay safe whether in or out of school and when online. Leaders are very much aware of potential vulnerabilities, such as within the school, and local risks, such as gangs, drugs and radicalisation. Leaders use every means necessary to prevent pupils falling into potential danger.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**outstanding**

- The impact of high-quality teaching over time is linked to the school's high expectations of what pupils can achieve within a setting that sets 'excellence' as its primary goal. Leaders demand much from teachers, and, equally, teachers require high-quality work and behaviour from pupils. This chain of command and expectations works well because teachers know their pupils very well.
- Pupils report that it is typical for teachers to provide extra support and stay after school. Pupils recognise the sacrifice that their teachers make to see them during break, lunchtime and in the GCSE revision centre. Teachers' commitment to pupils is

evident in the good classroom management, respect and relationships between teachers and pupils. These features lead to lessons running smoothly and pupils maintaining a high level of concentration throughout the school day.

- Teachers use their very good knowledge to challenge pupils in a supportive and structured way. They ensure that the most able pupils can aspire to complete work that is complex. Teachers' skilful questioning leads to deepening analysis of work, irrespective of pupils' starting points; they maintain pupils' focus on subject-specific vocabulary, they use time well and they make good use of short, timed activities and feedback to assess how well pupils are learning. Such short sessions give teachers an opportunity to develop further pupils' thinking, ask a range of questions and deal with misconceptions. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and apply the taught skills in all subjects.
- The emphasis on the EBacc subjects means that core basic skills in English and mathematics are highly developed. Pupils have well-developed literacy skills. Orally, they are confident and readily give and defend their viewpoints. Written work is well organised, detailed and accurate. They know how to analyse different texts and are accustomed to producing different forms of writing. Teachers focus strongly on helping pupils to learn from their mistakes and identify improvements in their work.
- Pupils said that mathematics is one of their favourite subjects, and work in books seen confirms that they set out their approach to answering questions meticulously. They are confident in applying the taught skills when solving problems, and they make very good progress when teachers assess work and set additional problems.
- Teaching assistants provide good support, monitoring and intervening swiftly to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils said that teachers provide sufficient challenge in lessons, particularly when they use a range of exam-type questions from past papers. Similarly, homework is routinely set and pupils consider that 'there is enough' in all subjects.
- Reports provide clear benchmarks for parents to know how well their child is achieving in subjects across the curriculum. Parents who took part in the online questionnaire said that they receive valuable information about their child's progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very much at ease in their school and proud to identify with it. They know that their teachers set ambitious targets for them that are higher than the national averages. They reported that their teachers 'do everything they can' to support them. Pupils rise to the challenges because they believe that their education at this school will help them to succeed when they move on to the next stage of their education and beyond. In this, they are highly ambitious and talk positively about their ultimate goals, entering university and serving others.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to begin exploring a wide range

of career choices from Year 7 onwards. Outstanding care and support ensure that the school tailors provision very well to the needs of different groups. For example, the most able are inspired to visit and think about attending Russell Group universities, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have many opportunities to take part in careers fairs and simulated work placements. The extensive range of activities all help to motivate pupils.

- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities provided to demonstrate and begin developing leadership skills through the school's specialist leadership programme. School council members typically demonstrate the principles of democracy and representation, while school ambassadors actively promote their school.
- The school's specialism in developing leadership skills is central to its work, primarily because it encourages participation, academic learning and curriculum development. Pupils are responsive to developing a range of skills, evident in their management and publication of the termly Edonian magazine. Pupils appreciate the 'specific days when the leadership programme focuses on developing leadership skills'. These days are useful because pupils can show off their skills and take part in group work. The specialist status builds pupils' confidence and 'empowers them', particularly when they meet successful entrepreneurs who have succeeded against all odds. Pupils spoke proudly about their win in the 2016 Mosaic Enterprise Challenge.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave impeccably well in lessons and around the building, including during social times. Pupils assessed their behaviour as 'great'. Pupils reported that there is no bullying. Pupils were very adamant that in their school, there is a 'sense of community and teamwork...' Pupils' behaviour and attitudes convey these views. Records show that unruly behaviour is, indeed, rare.
- Pupils are disciplined. Although they described the rules as 'strict', they keep to them as they are reasonable and they contributed to making them. A high proportion of parents strongly agreed that the school makes sure that pupils behave well. Pupils are confident that they can turn to an adult if there is a problem.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school. The high visibility of staff, and a range of other safety measures, reassures pupils that the school is a safe place to be. This includes the trust and confidence that pupils have in turning to a member of staff if they have a problem. Pupils recognise and applaud the steps that senior leaders have taken to develop their understanding of counter terrorism. Pupils claimed that they understand the rationale behind this work.
- Pupils like the fact that they live in a diverse society and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are reflective and recognise that their participation in the three-faith forum has strengthened and broadened their contact with other faiths or none, for example, Judaism and Christianity. Pupils recognise prejudice-based bullying and welcome the school's approach to preparing them for making the transition into adult life. Pupils appreciated the special guest speaker, primarily because he was open and honest and did not 'sugar coat his talk'. Consequently, pupils described themselves as 'realists'.

- Attendance has been consistently high since the school opened. Leaders have a range of approaches in place to monitor, track and promote high rates of attendance and tackle persistent absentees. Pupils arrive to school and lessons on time, well prepared and ready to begin working.

## Outcomes for pupils

## outstanding

- Eden Girls, as a member of the Tauheedul Educational Trust network of schools, sets highly ambitious targets that are well above the national average rates of progress. Without public examinations, senior leaders ensure that they regularly moderate the pupils' progress and the standards they achieve over time. Scrutiny of the school's assessment data and work in pupils' books confirm that pupils make outstanding progress across the curriculum from below-average starting points.
- The quality assurance process used to verify pupils' progress is reliable; it provides substantial evidence that the school is sustaining high standards. Detailed analyses of assessment information and work in folders and books show that most pupils in Year 10 consistently meet the ambitious targets from below-average starting points. A small minority exceed the rates of progress set in both English and mathematics and in the EBacc subjects.
- Across all year groups, the quality of pupils' work in all subjects is well above average. While a few pupils exceed the school's progress targets in all subject areas, a minority consistently exceed them in modern foreign languages, including Arabic.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress. Scrutiny of work, assessment sheets and case studies show that this group of pupils makes similarly rapid progress to that of their peers. Leaders use the funding effectively to meet the needs of this group of pupils, thereby ensuring that they receive appropriate support. This leads to these pupils exceeding the set targets for other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils make outstanding progress and are ahead of other pupils nationally from their different starting points. Work scrutiny, internal tests and other assessment information show strong evidence of outstanding progress in almost all subjects. The school uses the leadership programme extremely well to raise pupils' aspirations and stretch their ways of thinking. Pupils from Year 7 onwards, who take part in extension activities, including the 'Brilliant club' and visits to Russell Group universities, said that their involvement boosts their confidence and personal skills very well.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, make similarly significantly above-average progress compared with other pupils nationally.
- All pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Assessment information shows that all ethnic groups achieve equally well in most subjects. Where differences exist, such as among a few pupils in Years 7 and 8 who are developing their English language skills, suitable strategies are in place to support their learning.



## School details

Unique reference number	140957
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10031668

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	Tauheedul Education Trust
Chair	Ayasha Esakji
Principal	Shahina Ahmad
Telephone number	020 8523 1810
Website	<a href="http://www.edengirlswalthamforest.com">www.edengirlswalthamforest.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@edengirlswalthamforest.tetrust.org">info@edengirlswalthamforest.tetrust.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Eden Girls School, Waltham Forest opened as a new free school in September 2014. It is one of 18 schools within the Tauheedul Education Trust (TET). The school opened because of the community's demand for a new and high-achieving school for girls from a Muslim background.
- The school opened with 150 pupils, 100 in Year 7 and 50 in Year 8. Since September 2015, approximately 100 pupils have entered Year 7. With 346 pupils, the school is currently much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. In response to local demand, from September 2017 onwards, the school expects to expand each year with 120 pupils per year group. The school is currently oversubscribed with three applications for every place offered. When full to capacity, the school expects to have

840 pupils on roll. This will include the sixth form, which the school plans to open with 200 students in September 2018.

- The school is an Islamic faith school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from Asian heritage, and almost all are speakers of English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average.
- No pupils currently on roll attend an alternative provision.
- The school is currently undergoing refurbishment. The expected completion date is September 2018. A 16–19 creative arts provider currently shares the school's site.
- The school's specialism is leadership, the main field of interest in all schools within the Tauheedul Education Trust.
- The Tauheedul Education Trust is the main governing body with legal responsibility for all schools within the trust. The local governing body focuses on the day-to-day responsibilities of the school.
- As a new school in its third year, it is too soon to report standards in public examinations. The first cohort of Year 7 pupils, now in Year 10, will take the first public examinations during the current summer term, 2017, in ICT and religious education. This group of pupils will enter Year 11 in September and will take a range of GCSE examinations in the summer term 2018.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited a range of lessons across a number of subjects and in each year group. The inspectors observed a few lessons with senior leaders.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in all subjects. This enabled them to gather evidence about the quality of teaching and rates of pupils' progress over time.
- Meetings were held with the principal, other senior and middle leaders with specific responsibilities, newly qualified teachers and four members of the local governing body, including the chief education officer. A telephone conversation took place with the link adviser from the Department for Education.
- The inspector took into consideration a range of external reviews, moderation activities and reports from the local authority, the Department for Education, the Tauheedul Trust and consultants.
- The inspectors considered the 43 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View and the 43 free-text comments. Inspectors also took into account two letters from parents and an email.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and development plan, information on pupils' previous and current attainment and their progress over time. Records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and evidence of systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils were examined. Other documents relating to the curriculum, performance management and a range of policies were taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Carmen Rodney, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Jennese Alozie	Ofsted Inspector

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