

## **EDEN GIRLS' SCHOOL WALTHAM FOREST**

Inspection Report

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**Local authority:** Waltham Forest  
**Inspected under the auspices of:** AMS UK  
**Inspection dates:** 22 May 2017  
**Lead inspector:** Hasina Varachia

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy Free School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number on roll</b>	346
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Tauheedul Education Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Aysha Esakji
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shahina Ahmad
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Address</b>	Silver Birch House Blackhorse Lane Walthamstow London E17 5SD
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# Introduction

## Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Hasina Varachia

Team Inspectors: Yusuf Seedat and Mohammad Asad

This inspection was carried out by three inspectors. They visited lessons or parts of lessons including observing registration, break time and lunch time. They held meetings with the senior leadership team, staff, lead governor for RE, parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupil's written work, planning of the RE (Religious Education) and PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship Education) curriculum, various school self-evaluation documents, the school's Faith Ethos Action Plan and parent questionnaires.

The inspection team looked at the following in detail:

- The religious education (RE) curriculum
- The progress pupils make in RE
- The quality of teaching in RE
- Leadership and management for RE
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), including collective worship.

## Information about the school

The Eden Girls' School Waltham Forest is an Islamic Free School. It is run by the Tauheedul Education Trust. The school is a small secondary school with pupils from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds. Most pupils are of the Muslim faith, with one non-Muslim pupil. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is above the national average and those with special educational needs is below the national average.

## Inspection judgments

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	1
<b>The achievement of pupils in their religious education.</b>	1
<b>The quality of teaching and learning.</b>	1
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of religious Education, including the role of the school's governing body in RE.</b>	1
<b>The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs.</b>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the daily act of collective worship.</b>	1

### **Overall effectiveness: the quality of religious education provided at Eden Girls' School Waltham Forest is Outstanding because:**

The school aims to deliver the highest expectations and standards of faith ethos, consistent with its' mission statement, *'To promote a culture of educational excellence, from within a caring and secure Islamic environment enriched with the values of discipline, mutual care and respect which extends beyond the school into the wider community'...* The school is highly successful in meeting this aim.

Pupils demonstrate secure learning qualities and as a result make excellent progress throughout the school. They are receptive, alert, articulate and motivated. Their creativity is clearly evident. The quality of teaching is characterised by genuine passion for the subject and great enthusiasm within the classroom which ensures that pupils' learning is outstanding.

Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are confident, happy and self-reflective, with concern and respect for both peers and staff. They are socially aware as a result of the diverse range of activities that pupils experience which promotes deep-rooted understanding of other cultures. The quality of care provided by the school is excellent as are the standards of pupils' behaviour. Relationships are based on mutual trust and respect and the school operates as a harmonious and happy community. Pupils' views are routinely sought through the school council.

Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place demonstrating that safeguarding the welfare of the pupils is of utmost concern. The school works closely with the local prevent team and has also delivered training on Fundamental British Values to other schools as part of the Waltham Forest Challenge Training Programme.

The principal, other leaders and governors have ensured that RE, collective worship and the curriculum are informed by Islamic values which contribute strongly to pupils'

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. School displays reinforce these messages further.

At times, pupils miss the opportunity to exchange in salaam to their teachers or their peers or to send salutations when the Prophet's (SAW) name is mentioned.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school and incidences of bullying are rare.

Attendance is given high priority. As a result, attendance in 2016 was 96.3%.

The RE curriculum is rich and exciting and provides invaluable opportunities for pupils to develop as British citizens. Relationships with other schools, local faith groups and the wider community are strong.

Since the school began, charity work has raised significant funds for local, national and international communities and supports a number of very worthy causes. These experiences enable pupils to show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of others. For example, in discussion with inspectors, one pupil said, *'Although we are not old enough to work, we get an insight of how happy it makes us feel when we give to others.'*

Fundamental British Values are promoted effectively throughout the curriculum, assemblies and displays. Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of these values.

Daily activities and Spirituality Days contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual development as does the quality of collective worship. Collective worship is an important part of the life of the school and engages the whole school community. These opportunities allow pupils to reflect on Islamic values and how these relate to their own lives. As a result, it makes a very positive contribution to the spiritual development of the whole school community.

The school has established a Faith Ethos Group consisting of the principal and two other members of staff which ensures a close eye is kept on the impact that Faith and Ethos has on the provision, behaviour of pupils and academic achievement in the school. The school works closely with the Tauheedul Educational Trust and monthly briefing mail further ensures that the school regularly promotes the aim that pupils, *'... become the people that the Almighty meant us to be.'*

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

- To set appropriate homework which would allow pupils to build on their learning of Islam.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management of Religious Education is outstanding because:**

Leaders are effective in providing training, support and guidance to staff. Monitoring and evaluation through lesson observations, checks on planning and pupils' work are part of the constant drive to improve. These processes result in improvements to teaching and learning which ensures consistently outstanding results. Regular CPD is provided to support staff in developing spirituality and contributing to shaping the Islamic Ethos of the school.

Governors are highly committed and maintain a clear, strategic role in shaping the development of the school and have appropriate systems in place to monitor and support its' provision and ensure the safeguarding of pupils.

Governors are secure in their knowledge of the faith and ethos of the school and how this is reflected in the school curriculum. Governors receive a thorough induction covering all aspects of their role on joining the school.

Reports are provided by the principal on the Faith and Ethos to governors. She also informs the Trust in a monthly report on all development, positive and any negative, in the delivery of the Faith Ethos and Values agenda.

The school has good relationships with parents and they in turn play an active role in the school. Some parents are also involved in the half-termly Parent *Shura* (Council) meetings through which they have organised a number of events to support the school. These include a quiz night which raised money for the library and a Macmillan coffee morning. Some parents shared with inspectors that they would like the school to further encourage the role that parents play in the Islamic life of the school.

The school provides parents with detailed reports each year about their daughters' progress. An overwhelming majority of parents spoken to by inspectors would recommend the school to other parents.

Pupils' awareness of other cultures is strong. There are many opportunities afforded by the curriculum and by visits for pupils to explore cultures different from their own. External speakers also enrich pupils' experiences and relationships with other schools strongly promotes cultural awareness.

Each year, the pupils participate in activities that celebrate key cultural events in the British calendar. Recently, pupils have participated in commemorations for Holocaust Memorial Day and Armistice Day including participation in 'Silence in the Square' which received recognition in the national press. Pupils and staff have also participated in activities marking the 800<sup>th</sup> year of the Magna Carta, the centenary of World War 1 and the Battle of the Somme.

These experiences have enabled the school to strengthen and develop the Fundamental British Values taught already to pupils throughout the curriculum. During discussion with

inspectors, parents were keen to share that their daughters had developed a secure understanding of other faiths following these visits to places of worship and visitors to school. One parent particularly noted that his daughter although not a Muslim, has not only developed a secure understanding of Islam but happily now wears the hijab as part of her school uniform, although not required to do so, and that she has developed a strong understanding of her own faith such that she recently gave a presentation to her peers which made him very proud.

School leaders and governors firmly challenge all types of extremism. All staff receive regular safeguarding updates and WRAP training takes place annually.

**The quality of teaching and learning in delivering the RE curriculum is outstanding because:**

Accurate and detailed assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding, combined with teachers' extensive subject knowledge and high-quality teaching secures rapid progress. Intricate planning of lessons clearly shows teaching staff have developed innovative and highly successful approaches to capture interest of all pupils. They demonstrate high levels of commitment and engagement with the result that pupils are enthusiastic and successful learners with very positive attitudes.

Teachers use questioning very skilfully in lessons to challenge pupils and extend their learning. They listen carefully to what pupils say and value their responses. Throughout lessons, pupils routinely reflect upon what they are learning.

Flexible approaches to planning lessons ensures pupils keep up with what is expected. It also allows the most-able pupils to flourish, deepen their understanding and applying their knowledge in different ways in all subjects. Lesson observations by middle and senior leaders confirms this view.

A combination of challenging work and interesting material means that in lessons pupils maintain a high level of engagement in what they are learning about so behaviour in lessons is excellent. For example, in an outstanding year 8 RE lesson, pupils were thoroughly engaged as a result of the use of a recent video which was selected to help encourage pupils relate their understanding of equality and discrimination in a modern context. One pupil went on to say that even with the human right to freedom of speech, there must always be consideration for others.

Teaching values the diversity of pupils' experiences which provides pupils with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their own.

Staff have benefitted from extensive training and continued professional development. The lead for teaching and learning in the school ensures staff all receive the support needed to deliver the very best outcomes for pupils, ensuring they achieve their potential and beyond.

Marking of pupils' work is regular and accurate and provides clear guidance on how pupils can improve further. Marking challenges pupils to respond to teachers' comments and as a result, subsequent work shows clear improvement. This ensures pupils take responsibility for their own learning. Inspectors however noted that pupils do not receive written overt praise for their efforts and progress towards learning objectives and success criteria which would allow pupils to feel their efforts have been acknowledged.

A thorough tracking system is in place and clearly shows that the progress of learners in RE is assessed formally through assessments each half-term. These are used to provide regular feedback to pupils and parents, along with targets for improvement.

**The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs is outstanding because:**

The RE curriculum is well-organised and imaginative providing rich opportunities for high quality learning, wider personal development and well-being. The curriculum comprises of and is delivered through RE, PSHCE, assemblies, *hadith* and *Sunnah* of the Week and theme based projects.

Collective worship comprises of reciting *Surah al-Fatihah* (Opening Chapter of the Holy Qur'an) at the start of every lesson in English and Arabic. For congregational prayers, the school has a staggered lunchtime for pupils where they are given the option to pray Zohar *salah* in winter, if they wish to do so.

In order to facilitate accelerated progress, the school has devised their own KS3 curriculum, which provides a thematic approach to Religious Studies that is delivered over two years. This ensures that the pupils are ready to begin GCSE Religious in year 9.

In years 7 and 8, pupils explore the six major world religions and also learn about atheism and humanism. This ensures pupils are well prepared for the study of RE at KS4 which now requires all pupils to take a comparative approach to philosophical questions and moral and ethical debate. In lessons, Islam is used as the base religion for comparison with other religions and world beliefs.

Pupils participate in a range of enrichment activities as part of the curriculum. This includes fundraising activities, advocacy for campaigning groups, participating in faith trails to places of religious significance and representing the school at interfaith events, such as the Belief and Beyond Belief festival where pupils showcased a reflective theatrical performance on the creation story.

The school has pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds and in lessons they are taught that Islam is a multi-cultural faith, hence celebrating the cultural diversity within the school. Learners are also taught about different beliefs within Islam; this is explicitly covered in the year 9 curriculum which allows learners to develop a tolerant and respectful view of the distinctions and commonalities between Sunni and Shia perspectives.

Pupils have regular opportunities to celebrate the Islamic faith through events like World Hijab Day, Eid Extravaganza and Iftar events. In addition, pupils meet with inspirational Muslims who are leaders in their field. Pupils also have an opportunity to explore the contribution Islam has made to civilisation in other lessons such as history where recently a specialist was invited to the school to speak about the Muslim contribution to the British war effort.



**The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is Outstanding because:**

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The Tauheedul Trust and the leadership and managements focuses on SMSC, through the school's ethos and systems and policies, to be central pivotal to all it does.

Spiritual development is one of the school's core values which are embedded such that students demonstrate the readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit (for example: poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, moral neutrality or indifference, farce, fanaticism, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination pupils' beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values). They further develop spirituality by reflection through daily prayer, fast and acts of worship and regular mentoring. This is also achieved through various extra- curricular initiatives such as undertaking a range of interfaith activities, interfaith trails, visits by speakers of different faiths, an interfaith conference that is delivered locally each year and explore their own character development through Life Skills lessons at KS3 and Citizenship lessons at KS4. Students participate in, and deliver assemblies regularly to foster their values and ethos. This also develops and instils their leadership skills.

There is a strong sense of moral purpose on the part of leaders and governors, and students show high levels of respect for others, act to help those less fortunate than they are and have well-developed views on a wide range of moral and ethical issues. The provision is delivered through engaging students in debating moral and ethical issues through Life Skills and Science lessons, evaluate the moral and ethical implications of human actions through Science, Religious Studies, Humanities, Citizenship and the morning registration programme and exploring the concepts of right and wrong through assembly, Religious Studies lessons and Citizenship lessons.

Eden Girls' School Waltham Forest outstanding Social development is through students undertaking many activities which help to raise awareness of the hardship and suffering of others. They help to raise funds for charities and social enterprises – locally, nationally and globally. They acquire excellent social skills (empathy, emotional literacy and effective participation) through team-working in lessons, meeting and collaborating with other young people of different socio-economic backgrounds and with young people from other schools undertaking on a number of projects throughout the year.

The outstanding cultural development of students at Eden Girls' is instilled in students through developing strong British values through their learning across the curriculum and activities relating to special events such as the centenary of World War 1. They also participate in a number of enrichment activities, including community cohesion forums, to develop an appreciation of cultural diversity.

There are very strong relationships between students and staff, and a shared love of learning, which contribute to students' outstanding attitudes and behaviour inside and outside of lessons. They show courtesy and good manners, and are welcoming and respectful to visitors, staff and each other.

The school prepares students exceptionally well for future success and life in a multicultural society. The school has been open for nearly three years but rapidly, the leadership Framework in place, is clearly laying out the key competencies required to develop as well-rounded, ethical and accomplished leaders of tomorrow.

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

Further enhance the SMSC provision by developing an SMSC compliance toolkit for use by senior leaders.

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school which they feel provides an excellent education and develops their children's confidence and leadership skills. The school management help students to make independent choices and take full responsibilities for their actions and as one parent says, 'encourages high standards in all it does including in Islamic studies and in faith'.

## Glossary

What inspection judgments mean

Grade	Judgment	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.