

# Jamea Al Kauthar

Ashton Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 5AJ

**Inspection dates** 2–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Requires improvement	3
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teachers do not use what they know of students' prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 to plan lessons with sufficient challenge. Their assessment of students' current progress is also over-generous. Consequently, younger students get off to a slower start than they should.
- Teachers do not always insist that the quality of students' written English is at its best or effectively model this themselves. Students' use of grammar and punctuation is not accurate enough.
- Students do not yet have enough choice of subjects at GCSE or A level.
- Subject leaders do not have the skills they need to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders do not rigorously check that all staff follow consistently school policies and other written guidance. Aspects of health and safety require further improvement.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunities to meet and work with members of other communities and faith groups.
- Leaders do not use achievement information to check that all groups are making good progress, or to inform teachers' performance management.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the school meets all regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools.
- Students regularly attain well above the national average at GCSE. The progress all groups of pupils make from their starting points is consistently good across all subjects.
- In some subjects, such as English literature and Urdu, students make exceptional progress with the majority reaching the highest grades at GCSE.
- The leadership of the headteacher, who is also the head of boarding, is good. She is an inspirational role model who is effectively developing the expertise of other senior leaders.
- Leaders effectively promote British values. Students' social, moral and spiritual development is a particular strength.
- Students' oracy skills are excellent. They are confident, articulate young women who all say they feel happy and safe in school.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with no notice to the school.
- Inspectors observed eight lessons in the school and paid additional shorter visits to observe learning in the Madrasah. Inspectors conducted a scrutiny of work from across all subjects from a sample of students in Years 7 and 9.
- Inspectors spoke to three groups of students, including members from the school council and a group who will soon graduate from the school. Inspectors also spoke to students in lessons and at lunchtime in the dining hall. Inspectors also met students informally during their free time in the boarding accommodation.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, including the proprietor and the heads of the boarding and school provision, including the head of sixth form. They spoke with teaching and boarding staff as well as with those staff with responsibility for maintaining the premises and accommodation. An inspector spoke to the deputy headteacher of a local primary school whose pupils have recently visited the school. One inspector also spoke to a nurse practitioner and with the local fire safety officer.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation relating to students' welfare, health and safety. This included medical records, risk assessments and the school's maintenance and improvement plan. The school's use of sanctions and exclusions to deal with any poor behaviour was examined. The admissions record and registers were also all checked.
- Inspectors considered the 85 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. One inspector also spoke to a parent by telephone.

## Inspection team

Philippa Darley, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shellie Barcroft	Additional Inspector
Sarah Drake	Additional Inspector
Denise Jolly	Social Care Inspector
Christine Scully	Social Care Inspector
Anne Bannister	Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Jamea Al Kauthar is a Muslim boarding school for girls. It provides both an Islamic and a secular education. The school is registered for students from 11 to 20 years old and there are currently 358 students on roll, all of whom board.
- The school occupies the site of the former Royal Albert Hospital buildings. It comprises: the main building which houses the boarding facilities; a single storey school building, where students receive their secular education; a two-storey Madrasah building, where most of the Islamic curriculum is taught; and a building which houses separate information and communications technology (ICT) and science facilities.
- The school aims to: 'Facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge, skills and qualities which helps them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically and morally, so that they become independent, responsible, useful, thinking, confident and considerate members of the community.'
- The school is owned by the Albadr Islamic Trust. The proprietor is also the Principal at the school.
- The school operates an admission policy of selection by ability based on end of Key Stage 2 test results and internal examinations in English, mathematics and science. All students attend Islamic courses each morning and students in Key Stage 3 and 4 follow secular courses in the afternoon. The school operates a compulsory homework session each evening.
- The school has appointed a new sixth form leader since the last inspection. This was formerly run by Preston Sixth Form College but the school now oversees its own A-level provision.
- The students are exclusively taught and looked after by female staff. Most of the boarding staff are also teachers at the school and they reside in the boarding houses with the students. Most of the auxiliary staff, including security personnel, are male.
- Many of the teachers are former students of the school. Most of these are undertaking Open University qualifications as a transition route to higher education.
- The school's most recent full inspection of education and boarding took place in April 2013. This judged the school to be inadequate with a number of welfare, health and safety concerns. Following this, there have been several unannounced monitoring visits to the school. The final unannounced welfare visit was conducted in February 2015. At that time, three national minimum standards were not met.

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

- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring leaders at all levels consistently check on how the school's policies, particularly in relation to welfare, health and safety, are implemented in order to establish a culture of excellence across all aspects of the school's work
  - improving the accuracy of the data leaders have on achievement and regularly checking that all groups of students are making the best progress possible
  - using the information that leaders gather on student achievement to inform the performance management of teaching staff
  - developing the skills of the school's subject leaders so that they can have a greater impact on improving further the quality of teaching
  - enabling younger students to access the excellent careers advice and guidance that exists in the school.
- Further improve students' achievement by:
  - continuing to develop the curriculum so that students at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form can access a broader range of subject choices
  - raising teachers' expectations about what students can achieve as they start Key Stage 3
  - ensuring teachers model good written English, enabling students to expand their writing styles and promote accuracy of grammar and punctuation.
- Provide students with increased opportunities to meet and work with people from other faith and community groups.
- Provide additional formal opportunities for staff to reflect on their boarding practice and consider any additional training needs.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### require improvement

- Although all of the national minimum standards and independent school regulations are met, not all teachers consistently apply the school's policies in relation to welfare, health and safety. Leaders do not check rigorously enough that what they have instructed staff to do happens in practice. Consequently, aspects of the school's cleanliness and the robustness of the school's risk assessment processes require further improvement.
- Subject leaders do not yet have the skills to drive improvement in their areas of work effectively. They are involved in monitoring the quality of teaching through looking at students' workbooks within their teams. From this, they have identified support for teachers in improving assessment and feedback. However, they have not addressed the lack of challenge in lessons for younger students.
- The headteacher, who is also the head of boarding, is an inspirational role model for other leaders and staff in the school. She drives improvement with tenacity and sets very high standards that she expects others to follow. However, other leaders have not been as scrupulous as she is in ensuring that policies and protocols are followed consistently.
- Leaders ensure that teachers regularly assess students' progress through a series of internal, termly tests and ongoing teacher assessments. However, they have not identified that assessment at Key Stage 3 is inaccurate, with teachers having an over-generous view of students' achievement.
- Leaders do not use assessment information to check regularly that all students are making the best progress they could. For example, they are not yet able to say if the more-able students or those students who are new to learning English are making consistently good progress across the school. Consequently, their plans for improving teaching are not robustly based on what they could know about current achievement.
- The capacity for improvement in the leadership team is evident in the rapid action leaders have taken to address fully the shortcomings identified at the previous monitoring inspection. Protocols and records in the medical department now ensure that staff expertly support students and access external medical advice, when necessary.
- All leaders, including the proprietor, are fully committed to ensuring that fundamental British values are taught and inculcated in the students. Teachers are expected to plan regularly for these opportunities in lessons. Inspectors observed examples of this in the work from both the Madrasah and in secular subjects. Leaders work closely with the local police diversity officer to ensure that students know about the dangers of extremism. They have made considerable investment in developing a personal, social and health education (PSHE) package that tackles these issues directly. Leaders do all they can to ensure that the students are educated to understand Islam as a religion of peace, equality and tolerance.
- Leaders have ensured that students make good progress over their time in the school in their literacy and communication skills. While their written English is not as well developed, students' command of spoken English is excellent. They are highly articulate, confident, speakers and listeners; this has a notable impact on the progress they make in lessons.
- Older students and those in the sixth form receive effective independent advice and guidance, for example through a recent 'roadshow' of higher education and careers guidance held at the school. The school teaches younger students about possible career routes in PSHE and has plans to extend the use of independent advisers into the lower year groups.
- Almost all the parents who completed the online survey stated that they would recommend the school to others.
- The school's work to ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are met is effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The proprietor retains oversight of leadership and management at the school. He meets regularly with his senior leadership team to check that the school improvement plan is being implemented. However, he and the trustees do not receive sufficient information about the progress of groups of students, nor do they use this to make judgements about the quality of teaching.
  - Each member of staff receives an annual performance review meeting which identifies areas for improvement and any training needs. However, given that most teachers have a dual role as boarding staff, insufficient attention is given to also improving this aspect of their work.
  - The proprietor and Board of Trustees ensure that finances are prioritised in order to implement the school's improvement plan. They have written a comprehensive site maintenance and improvement schedule. Significant improvements have been made to the school's fire safety and to the quality of

the premises and accommodation both of the school and boarding provision.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students show enormous warmth and vitality when they welcome visitors to their school. They are keen to discuss how their school is helping them to develop into responsible young citizens. They are invariably courteous towards each other and to the staff they work with. Students regularly complete 'compliments' slips to thank their teachers for their hard work.
- The school's behaviour records show that behaviour is good over time, with most incidents being minor examples of students falling out with each other. The school sets a high bar for behaviour and the vast majority of students comply with this. Appropriate sanctions, such as temporary exclusions followed by a discussion about righting the wrong committed, are followed, such as in response to an incident of cyber-bullying.
- Students' attitudes to learning are generally positive and improve as they get older. Their work shows that they become very committed academics and this is reflected in the very high examination results that many of them achieve.
- Some younger students draw graffiti on their books, their school desks and in their rooms. Teachers have not yet secured a consistent approach to dealing with this behaviour, so it is not improving.
- Parents confirm that they are happy with the behaviour of students in the school.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. While all of the independent school standards for this aspect of provision are met, the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics to secure a good judgement.
- Not all staff consistently follow the school's policies in relation to maintaining the school premises and the school's risk assessment policies are currently under review. While site access is now secure, leaders' work in monitoring this is not robust.
- Students have a good awareness of different types of bullying. Those students who spoke to inspectors reported that bullying is rare and is effectively dealt with. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe online. Students spoke enthusiastically about the support they have received from the local police in understanding the risks posed by all forms of extremist ideologies. They could describe how to report concerns. The school ensures that students have independent listeners who are available for them to speak to at all times.
- The Islamic and secular curriculum both teach students about the importance of tolerance and respect for each other and towards people who live lives very differently to their own. However, students have insufficient opportunities to explore and fully understand these differences at first hand with members of different communities and faiths.
- During the inspection, an assembly was led by a member of the Jewish community. This is a powerful indication of and school leaders' commitment to extending inter-faith links and embedding them in the curriculum.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- The overall quality of teaching over time is good. Students make extremely good progress from their starting points at the start of Key Stage 3 to the end of their studies at GCSE level. However, the quality of teaching in lower Key Stage 3 and for sixth formers is less effective and progress slows for some students in these year groups.
- Teachers carefully plan lessons that include a variety of teaching approaches and which encourage students to work and collaborate with each other. This is true of both the Islamic and secular curriculum. Teachers build opportunities for students to lead on aspects of learning in lessons. Where inspectors saw this, for example in a mathematics lesson, it proved very effective as students questioned and checked each other's understanding.

- Many of the staff are new to teaching and are former students of the school. Leaders work effectively to support them in the development of their teaching skills. Most recently, they have focused on improving teachers' written feedback. This is now regular and often gives students opportunities to correct and improve their work. However, teachers do not model good written English in their feedback and do not correct students' grammar and punctuation with enough regularity. As a result, younger students in particular are more careless in their writing than they should be.
- More classrooms now have access to information technology and teachers use this to support learning. Teachers develop a wide range of resources to support the course text books. These provide students with good opportunities to discuss how their subjects connect to modern British society and events that are taking place in the world today.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- By the end of Key Stage 4, the achievement of students in all subjects is at least good. In 2014, significantly more students attained the benchmark figure of five GCSEs including English and mathematics than was typical nationally. All students in the current Year 11 are on track to achieve this standard. This demonstrates that their progress over time remains consistently strong.
- While the progress students make in some subjects is in line with what should be expected given their high prior starting points, in other subjects the progress they make is excellent. This is typically the case in English literature and in Urdu.
- However, this overall picture masks the fact that students make a slow start to the school in Year 7. Teachers do not use what they know of students' prior attainment in Key Stage 2 tests to plan lessons that have enough challenge. For example, students have insufficient opportunities to write using a range of language devices or to write at length. Some of the work seen by inspectors repeated what students would have encountered in the curriculum at primary school.
- The comparative achievement of different groups of students remains unclear as leaders do not analyse test and examination data for this information. However, it is clear that many of the more-able students are successful in attaining the highest grades at GCSE across a number of subjects.
- Students' skills in reading and in spoken English are embedded across the Islamic and secular curriculum. They have many opportunities, through drama, role-play, presentations and leading parts of lessons, to become proficient public speakers. This prepares them very well for the next stage in their education or training.
- While leaders continue to develop the range of qualifications on offer to students, they all follow the same GCSE courses of study and this limits their potential for achievement. For example, the school does not currently offer single science qualifications, which would support them to go on to study A-level science.

### The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The achievement of students in the sixth form requires improvement as students do not build on the high levels of attainment from their GCSE work. While students make reasonable progress in this key stage, not enough of them are achieving the highest grades.
- Leadership of the sixth form requires improvement. Leaders are aware that the secular curriculum offer in the sixth form is too restricted to ensure that students are able to choose from a sufficient variety of qualifications. Most current students take qualifications in English, religious studies or Urdu. Leaders continue to develop the curriculum, and have introduced a vocational information and communication technology (ICT) qualification. They remain mindful of maintaining a balance with students' Islamic studies, which also take up a considerable portion of their time.
- Students remain at the school following the sixth form in order to complete their Islamic studies. The majority of these students then go on to appropriate courses at university or college.
- The sixth form leader has written a robust action plan for improvement. She has introduced some effective information, advice and guidance that ensure students are aware of the full range of options open to them when they leave school.
- Inspectors were unable to observe teaching in the sixth form during this inspection. However, they spoke to students about their studies and observed them during private study times in the sixth form base. A-

level examination results indicate that the quality of teaching in this key stage requires improvement as not enough students attain the highest grades. However, many students complete their alimiyah (Islamic scholar) diploma at the same time.

- Sixth form students play a full role in the work of the school, with some of them acting as prefects and as representatives on the school council. They take responsibility for helping the younger students. A core group of them take any concerns raised at the council and consider possible solutions to these before they are taken to the headteacher. As with the rest of the school, their behaviour is good, with students acting with great maturity and sensitivity.

<b>Outcomes for boarders</b>	<b>are adequate</b>
<b>Quality of boarding provision and care</b>	<b>is good</b>
<b>Boarders' safety</b>	<b>is adequate</b>
<b>Leadership and management of the boarding provision</b>	<b>are adequate</b>

- Students make good progress academically and socially and their interaction with the wider community is improving. They have a mature understanding of British values and citizenship, and are proud of their cultural, spiritual and moral approach to life. As they prepare to leave, students are clear about the positive impact the school has had on their self-esteem and development. One girl said, 'This school has helped me to be proud of being a young Muslim woman. It has helped my sense of identity and helped me to develop into the confident person I am.'
- Staff are excellent role models and care deeply about students' welfare and happiness. Staff confirm that they feel well-supported and led by the head of boarding, who is highly accessible to both staff and students.
- Staff are able to identify areas of professional growth and development arising from the support and guidance they receive from leaders. However, they do not routinely reflect on how their development could be enhanced by additional training opportunities.
- The head of boarding has ample experience and a sound knowledge of the boarding service. She has a clear improvement plan that she regularly reviews with the leadership team. The effectiveness of this is evident, for example in the significant improvements made in the provision of medical care. She has also put in place an effective system to recognise trends and patterns in the behaviour of students, as well as improving the consistency of approach to their management. This has led to a reduction in sanctions being imposed, with most issues now being resolved at a first stage of discipline.
- Students consistently praise the care and support they receive from staff. They value the 'concerns and compliments' post boxes scattered around the boarding accommodation and send messages of appreciation to staff. If they raise a point for development, they receive a speedy response from staff. This helps them to feel valued and listened to, and actively participate within their community. One parent told inspectors, 'My girls are happy, I am happy; the school is a lovely place with a lovely atmosphere. Communication between me and school is really good.'

## What inspection judgements mean

### School and boarding

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).

Grade characteristics for the judgements made on the school's boarding provision can be viewed in the *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools* which is also available on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-schedule-for-the-inspection-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-schedule-for-the-inspection-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131355
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC039275
<b>Inspection number</b>	463526
<b>DfE registration number</b>	888/6034

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

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent School
<b>School status</b>	Independent boarding school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–20
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	358
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	90
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	N/A
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	358
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Fazl Wadee
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Fazl Wadee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Fazl Wadee (Principal) Mrs Aneesa Soheil (Headteacher and Head of Boarding)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–25 April 2013
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	N/A
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£3000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 389898
<b>Fax number</b>	01524 389333
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