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6 October 2017

Riyaz Laher  
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Dear Mr Laher

### **Short inspection of Madani Girls' School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 2017 with Sharon Bray, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders and governors have ensured that the school's religious character enriches the curriculum. Governors make sure that the school is outward looking, open to pupils of all faiths and those who have none. Pupils at the school come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Leaders celebrate and value a wide range of cultures through attractive displays around the school. The school environment is colourful, thought-provoking and reinforces the importance of learning.

Since your recent appointment, you have reinforced the belief that learning is at the heart of the school's work, through the simple words 'We're here to learn'; these words are visible throughout the school. You are working to ensure that leaders' 'ten non-negotiables for learning' form the basis for all teaching at the Madani Girls' School.

This is a time of positive change at the school. You told me, 'We're on the verge of something amazing!' as you outlined your determination to make the school outstanding in every respect. You value your staff and work with them to improve the school. Teachers told me they appreciated the consultations you held on planned changes. You are mindful of teachers' workload and prioritise the retention of good teachers, so that the improvements you make are sustainable. The governing body is good at identifying talented leaders and carefully plans how to make the best use of the skills that staff have.

Pupils respect the school's core values but are not afraid to challenge leaders if they want change. For instance, you are developing residential opportunities, including foreign travel, in response to pupils' requests. Leaders make sure pupils are looked after well. The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils' support for each other is striking and has a notable impact on their learning. We saw instances of pupils taking great care to explain vocabulary to classmates who were still in the early stages of learning English. Pupils are mature and have positive attitudes to learning. This supports their progress. We spoke to many pupils who are highly ambitious in both their career and their personal aspirations. School staff support pupils effectively to help them achieve their ambitions.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' attendance has continued to be high and few pupils are regularly absent. Pupils behave exceptionally well and very few pupils are excluded from school. Recently, you have reinforced very high expectations of pupils' conduct. Most parents and pupils understand why good behaviour is essential in school.

The previous inspection found that pupils made good progress. Leaders have made sure that current pupils continue to make good progress towards the challenging targets they set. Pupils make good progress in English. They attain examination results in English which are higher than those of pupils nationally. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress and attain highly in a wide range of subjects, especially English. Transition arrangements between primary and secondary school are exemplary and help pupils to make good progress as soon as they arrive at the school.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the progress the most able pupils make in mathematics. Leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and the most able pupils' progress has improved as a result. However, the improvements in pupils' progress in mathematics are comparatively recent.

Following the previous inspection, leaders were also asked to make sure that the tasks teachers set were well matched to pupils' abilities. During our observations of teaching, and through our scrutiny of pupils' work, we found that the tasks teachers set are now generally suited to pupils' abilities.

You are aware that some pupils have not achieved as well in GCSE geography and computing as they have in other subjects. You are working effectively with subject leaders to put this right. For example, you are checking that pupils have the high-level numeracy skills they need to succeed in computing.

Leaders have put in place a broad and balanced curriculum that equips pupils well for modern British society. You are, however, aware that you need to develop the curriculum to match pupils' interests and expand their opportunities further. Many high-quality extra-curricular opportunities are available to pupils, including on-site leisure facilities. Teachers are highly committed to extra-curricular activities.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders have made sure that all staff and governors are highly trained to act on child protection concerns. Middle leaders told me that the training they received on female genital mutilation and honour based violence has helped them to understand some of the dangers pupils may face. School records show that leaders challenge delays in responses from external agencies. The excellent pastoral curriculum equips pupils to deal with the most common risks they face, including those online. Leaders have strictly enforced policies on the use of electronic devices to protect pupils online.

You have a strong commitment to the public sector 'Prevent' duty. Staff make sure that pupils are fully aware of the dangers of extremism. Leaders' work to prevent extremism and protect pupils from this danger is exemplary.

You have identified the need to update your complaints procedures to ensure that there are clear records of leaders' actions following a complaint or concern.

## **Inspection findings**

- We looked at the quality of the school's curriculum. Leaders manage the curriculum well. Pupils have access to a range of opportunities. In the past, pupils have taken more examinations than pupils nationally. Leaders have recently reduced the number of examination subjects that pupils take. This is to help pupils be more successful in the subjects that remain and allow more time for the pastoral curriculum.
- Leaders take the abilities and aptitudes of different year groups into consideration when they plan the curriculum. Recently, for example, leaders introduced GCSE physical education in response to pupils' requests. Leaders have introduced Arabic at key stage 3. This offers pupils the option of studying more than one language at GCSE. There are now clear criteria for deciding which types of science qualifications pupils take at GCSE. The curriculum is well adapted to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders make good use of external training to add to the opportunities available for these pupils. However, leaders face some restrictions on the range of subjects they can offer because of the small numbers in each year group. Nonetheless, some pupils would benefit from additional curriculum opportunities, particularly in music and vocational subjects.
- In the past, only a small proportion of pupils took all of the examinations that make up the English Baccalaureate. Leaders understand the importance of this group of qualifications and have encouraged more pupils to take all of the subjects involved. As a result, the proportion of pupils in the current Year 11 taking the English Baccalaureate has more than doubled, to 38%.
- School leaders have developed a highly effective careers education programme, which meets all government requirements. Pupils told inspectors that they had

received high-quality independent advice and guidance. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are given extra help when they are planning what to do after they leave school. School staff organise an annual careers fair to give pupils the opportunity to consider a wide range of occupations. Leaders encourage pupils to look beyond gender stereotypes when planning their futures. For example, school leaders have recently promoted to pupils the opportunities available for women in construction and engineering through taster days.

- As a result of a successful careers education programme, pupils make well-informed choices about where to go when they leave school. The proportion of pupils who stay at the placements they go to at the age of 16 is high. Leaders are aware that a very small number of pupils go on to apprenticeships at the age of 16 compared to other pupils nationally. Careers staff are now actively promoting the potential benefits of apprenticeships to pupils and parents.
- Leaders ensure that teaching meets the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers consistently use high-quality resources to support pupils' literacy development. This is highly beneficial for these pupils. Staff are highly skilled and have received regular training on literacy and the specific needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Advanced learners who speak English as an additional language are challenged well in lessons. The school's records show they make good progress. Leaders make good use of literacy and numeracy catch-up funding to help pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, leaders are aware that the reports they have produced on how they use catch-up funding does not adequately reflect this good work.
- Leaders ensure that pupils make strong academic progress. Leaders set pupils high achievement targets and monitor pupils' progress carefully to help pupils be successful. Across different year groups and subjects, current pupils are making good progress towards ambitious targets.
- The progress of pupils who took examinations in 2016 was broadly average. Prior to 2016, pupils' examination results indicated stronger progress. Leaders and governors took firm action in response to 2016 examination outcomes to strengthen teaching and ensure that pupils made better progress. Pupils' 2017 examination results indicate that pupils' attainment has improved. Pupils' attainment in many subjects in 2017 is higher than pupils' attainment nationally.
- In the past, pupils' progress in mathematics has been broadly average compared to pupils' progress nationally. Leaders' records show that, as a result of improved teaching, pupils are now making better progress in mathematics. Leaders have recruited more specialist mathematics teachers to support pupils' learning. Pupils' recent GCSE examination results in mathematics show improvement and are now higher than those of pupils nationally. As improvements in mathematics are comparatively recent, it is important that leaders continue their focus on this area. Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved, but does not yet match the excellent progress pupils make in English.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on recent improvements in mathematics, so that pupils' progress in mathematics matches their strong progress in English
- they continue to develop the school's curriculum so that it responds to pupils' interests and allows pupils a wide range of opportunities when they leave school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ellenor Beighton  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you to discuss the school's progress since the last inspection. I held a meeting with middle leaders where we discussed the impact of their work to improve the school. We also met with a range of other senior leaders to hear how their work was helping to develop the school. I met with the chair of governors to discuss governors' priorities for improving the school. My colleague spoke to two groups of pupils about their safety, their learning and what it is like to be a pupil at this school. We spoke to pupils in more relaxed situations during the day where they were free to talk openly about their experience of school. We scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including the school's child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and the school's own assessment of the progress it is making. We undertook observations of teaching; some of our lesson observations were with school leaders. We viewed the work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their learning during lessons. My colleague also looked at pupils' work from last year to learn about pupils' progress over a longer period of time. I analysed the 10 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, the 11 free-text responses from parents, the 20 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.