

Madrasatul Imam Muhammad Zakariya

Keswick Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 8LX

Inspection dates

24–26 January 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Outstanding |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Outstanding |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Outstanding |
| Sixth form provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Outstanding |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders have created a culture in which pupils achieve outstanding outcomes. They did not rest on their laurels after the last inspection, and have significantly improved the quality of teaching.
- Pupils enter Year 7 with broadly average levels of attainment. Almost all of them make rapid progress and attain high standards at GCSE and high grades in A level subjects. In 2015, GCSE attainment unexpectedly dipped in history and English but was very strong in 2016.
- The headteacher and her team are extremely ambitious and strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are engaged and highly motivated in lessons and are proud to attend the school.
- Pupils develop a deep understanding of life in modern Britain and how British and Islamic values can complement each other.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Pupils attend for only one year but achieve excellent results in Arabic, Urdu and English examinations.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported and, as a result, make excellent progress. Attendance is excellent and many pupils willingly attend booster lessons and Saturday morning classes.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Learning is very rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. Teachers are highly skilled, motivated and conscientious. They take part in a wide range of training, and never give up on a pupil.
- Pupils move on to higher education and most go on to develop successful careers in fields such as medicine, law, finance and education.
- Assemblies and extra-curricular activities are used extremely effectively to reinforce pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Leaders ensure that all independent school standards are met and safeguarding procedures meet current national guidance.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fine-tune the methods that leaders use to monitor and drive improvement by:
 - examining more closely the data used to predict GCSE outcomes to ensure that predictions are accurate and unexpected declines do not happen.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and the proprietor ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher, who has worked at the school since it was established, has developed and sustained an environment in which pupils, including the most disadvantaged, can thrive and develop to the best of their potential.
- Continuous professional development and performance management are used very effectively to ensure that staff are challenged and supported so that teaching is never less than good and is often outstandingly effective.
- This school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain extremely well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given the highest priority. This approach encourages pupils to respect people from a wide range of backgrounds and with different beliefs.
- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy that meets all government requirements. Staff assist pupils to understand how they can stay safe. The school does not have a website but its policies are readily available to parents.
- Leaders consistently focus on improving outcomes for pupils and their determined actions have borne great dividends. There is a strong trend of improvement in overall examination success. However, on a few occasions, unforeseen dips have occurred in a small number of subjects. The annual development plan and self-evaluation report identify these issues and leaders have put them right. They recognise that even closer analysis of performance data will help to prevent inconsistency in pupils' outcomes.
- Teachers share the ethos and values of the school. They are trusted to teach in a way that they feel comfortable with and they are able to adapt methods to match pupils' needs.
- The broad, secular curriculum includes opportunities for mathematical, scientific, artistic and historical study and is carefully planned to complement Islamic studies. Leaders emphasise that all forms of extremism are unacceptable and pupils are encouraged to debate and listen to a wide range of views.

Governance

- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They listen carefully to the views of parents, pupils and staff and focus on trying to make a real difference. There is an active pupil council in place that influences leaders' decision-making.
- The proprietor has invested wisely to improve resources since the last inspection and plans are in place to enhance the facilities for physical education and information and communication technology.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Speakers from the local authority and police are invited into the school to provide teachers with valuable training and enable them to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have extremely good knowledge of the subjects they teach and pass on their enthusiasm to pupils.
- Teachers make lessons exciting and interesting, pupils respond well and even minor misbehaviour is rare. Teachers identify pupils who are in danger of falling behind and intervene to support them.
- Teachers set challenging homework and most students attend booster classes and Saturday morning school to enhance their skills.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is particularly successful when pupils join the school. Pupils' exercise books show excellent progression and all teachers have very high expectations of presentation and effort.
- Pupils are curious and interested in learning. They thrive in lessons and most take up opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Assemblies are often led by pupils, who are encouraged to develop their skills in public speaking and singing.
- In the lessons observed, teachers used targeted questions to individual pupils to test their understanding. However, on a few occasions, due to pupils' enthusiasm, the whole class responded verbally, which made it difficult for the teacher to ensure that all pupils had a solid understanding of key concepts.
- Parents are provided with clear information about their children's progress and how they can help them to improve. They are invited to celebration events and parents' evenings. Around two thirds of parents responded to the Parent View survey and those who did were very positive about the quality of teaching.
- Displays of pupils' work clearly show that pupils value the diversity of British society.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Levels of attendance and punctuality are very high. Pupils are given good advice on the benefits of healthy eating and active lifestyles.
- Pupils are confident and keen to explain how much they value the opportunities provided by the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to discuss and debate issues, showing respect for others' points of view. They are encouraged to be active citizens and understand the importance of democracy.
- Pupils are given extensive, impartial advice and guidance on careers and future education options, including apprenticeships and university and college choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Bullying is very rare and the incidents that are recorded are of a very minor nature. The use of derogatory or abusive language in school is practically non-existent.
- The school has not excluded any pupil since the last inspection. Teachers and leaders nip any signs of misbehaviour in the bud and successfully stop it from escalating.
- Pupils are made fully aware of any risks they may encounter in a range of situations, including risks associated with modern technology.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress, particularly when they join the school in Year 7. All groups of pupils develop excellent skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils who start at the school with levels of attainment below those typical for their age make up ground quickly. Those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress as their peers.
- In lessons, pupils work in mature and thoughtful ways. They are excited by the prospect of learning new things and clearly value the expertise of their teachers. They usually achieve high standards in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils' books and other work show clear progression and the development of deep understanding. They are challenged by their work and teachers clearly have high expectations in terms of presentation and accuracy of work.
- Due to their success in key stage 4, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and their future careers. The majority of pupils stay on to join the school sixth form for an additional year, while others join local colleges or apprenticeship providers.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- All the independent school standards are met in relation to sixth-form provision.
- The school offers one-year courses in Arabic, Urdu and English at A level, in addition to the Islamic degree programme. Most students gain high grades in Arabic and Urdu.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are of a high quality and prepare students well for the next stages of their education. Leaders recognise that even more could be done to promote students' use of research methods and develop their analytical skills.
- Careers advice is impartial and allows students to make informed choices about their future careers. Alumni return to give talks and act as role models for pupils. In recent years, pupils have progressed to careers in medicine, accountancy, law and education.
- Leaders ensure that students' personal development and well-being after school are given a high priority.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 133285 |
| DfE registration number | 350/6018 |
| Inspection number | 10007711 |

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.

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| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Girls |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Girls |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 124 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 20 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 4 |
| Proprietor | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Mahmood Chandia |
| Headteacher | Amena Sader |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £1200 |
| Telephone number | 01204 384434 |
| Website | None |
| Email address | admin@mimz.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 November 2010 |

Information about this school

- The school was established in 2000 and the same headteacher has been in post since that time. The aims and ethos of the school are to ensure that all pupils feel that their years in school are well spent and attain the highest levels of spiritual, moral and Islamic awareness. It plans to provide girls with a solid Islamic and secular education and furnish them with the necessary tools to become law-abiding, moral and well-rounded citizens.
- The school day begins at 8.20am and finishes at 4.30pm. In addition, there is a Saturday

morning session from 8.20am to midday. The curriculum includes study of the Koran and Ahaadeeth, Islamic jurisprudence and history, Arabic language and grammar, Urdu, English language and literature, mathematics, science, design, information and communication technology, modern and classic languages and textiles.

- Extra-curricular activities focus on the development of personal, health and social education and include trips to educational venues and religious places of worship and guest speakers. The school does not have any alternative providers of education but uses the facilities of local community centres and schools to provide physical education.
- There is a student council and students participate in competitive sports, fundraising activities, quizzes, nasheed competitions and public speaking. At the time of the inspection, no pupil had a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- Two inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress. In addition, the inspectors undertook focused learning walks, visited two assemblies and observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the board of trustees, the headteacher, school leaders and teaching staff. They spoke with pupils informally throughout the inspection to seek their views and held meetings with three groups of pupils from Years 7, 11 and 12.
- The inspectors scrutinised records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. School policies and school documentation were examined in detail.
- Inspectors took account of 23 staff questionnaires, the 52 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and the school's own parental survey.

Inspection team

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| Andrew Johnson, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Michael Gaskill | Ofsted Inspector |

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