

Manchester Muslim Preparatory School

551 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester, Lancashire M20 4BA

Inspection dates

6–8 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The dynamic leadership of the executive headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, is reinvigorating the school and driving improvements.
- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in all three subject areas is above the national average. Standards are not consistently as high in other subjects.
- All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make at least good progress throughout the school, and an increasing number make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is consistently good. Pupils learn at a good pace. Teachers ensure that pupils of differing abilities are suitably challenged and achieve well.
- In the early years, children are well taught and make a good start to their school life.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils develop self-confidence, tolerance and respect for others. They are aware of current affairs, concerned for those less fortunate and are very well prepared to make a positive contribution to life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning underpin their good success. Pupils thrive because they feel safe, valued and supported.
- The trustees monitor carefully what is happening in school and, together with senior leaders, ensure that all the independent standards are met.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and effective.
- Some middle leaders are new in post and are still developing their management skills.
- Leaders are at the early stages of establishing a more effective performance management system.

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?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers set the same high expectations for the quantity, quality and presentation of work in subjects across the curriculum as they do in writing and mathematics
 - embedding the new tracking system to provide closer checking of pupils' progress.
- Further enhance leadership and management, by:
 - developing the skills and expertise of middle leaders
 - establishing an effective performance management system.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher is unwavering in her determination to secure an outstanding education for pupils in the school. She is providing excellent leadership. She receives strong support from the acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher, who share her ambition. After a period of instability in staffing and in leadership they have created a culture in which pupils achieve well and feel safe and happy.
- Leaders and trustees have created a culture where high expectations are the norm. Senior leaders have a very accurate awareness of the quality of teaching and learning and provide coaching where necessary to support both whole-school priorities and individual needs. As a result, teaching is improving.
- A new tracking system introduced and developed by the acting headteacher is enabling teachers and parents to track the progress of individual pupils and groups more closely and more accurately.
- The focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is producing pupils who have a deep understanding of tolerance and equality and who develop a strong sense of responsibility to others. Alongside Islamic studies, pupils also learn about the precepts of other faiths.
- Parents have the highest regard for the executive headteacher. They believe she is changing the culture of the school and is inspiring in their children a love of learning, a thirst for knowledge and high ambition. They also praise the dedicated staff, the family atmosphere and the high academic standards.
- The very knowledgeable and competent leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is ensuring that these pupils do not work at a disadvantage and are able to make the same good progress as their peers.
- The school offers a bright, stimulating learning environment, celebrating the wide curriculum and providing a window in the world. This is an outward-looking school, keen to learn from others and share its own good practice.
- There is widespread evidence across the school of the promotion of British values. Assemblies celebrate and commemorate events such as Remembrance Day, Black History Month, Children in Need, and Holocaust Memorial Day. Through many subjects in the curriculum and the ethos of the school, pupils are extremely well prepared for wider British society. Leaders and pupils are working toward becoming a 'rights respecting school'.
- The curriculum is enriched with many trips and visits such as to the Houses of Parliament and the People's History Museum in Manchester. The pupils have also had a visit and talk from the most senior Muslim police officer in the country.
- The executive headteacher is aware of the need to enhance and develop the skills of middle leaders to enrich the capacity of the school to further improve. To compensate for the lack of effective performance management processes in the recent past, she is introducing a new performance management system which is currently in place in the trust's secondary schools. The lack of a performance management system has limited the

professional development of middle leaders in the past.

Governance

- Governance is effective.
- Trustees have taken decisive action to improve and strengthen leadership across the school. The trustees are highly professional and clear about their roles. They are dedicated to school improvement and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas which can be improved in school. They ensure that the independent school standards are fully met.
- Trustees provide both challenge and support to the school. They are rigorous in their examination of performance information, including internal assessment records and regularly check on the progress of groups and individuals.
- All the schools owned by the trust are benefiting from sharing expertise and training.
- The trustees ensure that the performance management of the executive headteacher is effective. They are supporting her with the introduction of a new system which will apply to all staff.
- Trustees have a high level of expertise in ensuring that the school building is well-maintained and that financial resources are managed effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding has the highest priority and is seen as the shared responsibility of all adults in school. Work to protect pupils from extremism is exemplary. The school's safeguarding policy, available on the website, is extensive, fully up to date and frequently reviewed. It takes into account all relevant guidance. Leaders regularly engage with parents and other stakeholders to ensure that all pupils are supported and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Excellent behaviour for learning was observed throughout the inspection and is clearly the norm. Teachers set very high expectations for pupils' engagement and involvement in their learning.
- Learning is regularly brought alive by links to real-life situations and examples. A lesson in Year 4 on parallel and perpendicular lines was made very real by showing images of wood grain, bricks and other building materials. In a history lesson, pupils in Year 6 were looking at archaeological artefacts to understand how much we can learn about early societies from studying the objects they used.
- Teachers use probing questioning to check pupils' understanding and take learning further. Challenge is high in most lessons and pupils are given time to think and consider their answers. Year 2 pupils have produced some memorable 'postcards' from their imaginary visits to some of the wonders of the world such as the summit of Mount Everest, the Taj Mahal and the river Nile.
- When technology is used for research, pupils are expected to note down the information

they are gaining so that no learning is lost. Pupils are learning effective research skills.

- Phonics is well taught right from the Nursery so that pupils achieve well at the end of both key stages. The teaching of reading is a priority, with a necessary focus on reading for nuance and inference. The school provides a well-stocked library used by nearly all pupils.
- The teaching of writing is effective as pupils become experienced in many different genres. There is a strong emphasis on broadening pupils' vocabulary.
- The focus in mathematics is on ensuring that pupils gain mastery in different aspects and become confident, secure learners. An encouraging sign in one classroom states, 'mistakes are expected, respected, inspected, corrected' demonstrates the supportive encouragement to learning which builds pupils' confidence.
- Teachers ensure that pupils learn in bright, stimulating rooms where their best work is displayed and celebrated.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress because work is adapted to their abilities and they have the encouragement and support of teaching assistants.
- Teachers set very high expectations for pupils' work in writing and mathematics. However, at times this is not the case in other subjects across the curriculum, where the standard of presentation is not consistently as high. In some subjects teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy school and are rightly proud of their school and their achievements. They show respect for each other's opinions and value their support in learning and in play. Older pupils are socially adept and equipped with strong spiritual and moral values. They have a deep understanding of tolerance and equality which lie at the heart of fundamental British values.
- Pupils very much enjoy debates and discussions. For example, Year 3 pupils have had several debates this year on topics such as 'which is better, watching television or reading a book?' and 'should we get prizes for our work?' Their contributions are mature and well expressed.
- Pupils are mindful of their neighbours and are involved in many events in the local community. A small group of 'eco-warriors' are working towards gaining green school status. Pupils' interest in all members of society and in the protection of the natural world are examples of their excellent personal development.
- Pupils are unanimous in agreeing that there is no bullying in school. They are aware of the different forms that bullying can take and know that it is always wrong. Pupils are confident that they understand the rules for keeping safe when using social media or the internet. Pupils value each other without prejudice. Speaking for many, one pupil summed this up by saying that judging someone on how they look or where they were born is wrong.

- Pupils feel safe because they trust the adults in school and can see for themselves the many security measures the school has to keep them safe. Pupils have an intelligent awareness of risk, which begins in the Nursery. Lessons in personal, social and health education enable pupils to make sensible decisions and teach them how to say 'no'. They have an excellent understanding of the possible hazards in the use of the internet and social media.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning observed in lessons during the inspection and in their books over time are excellent. Pupils are eager to please their teachers and to be successful.
- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary. From the start of breakfast club to the end of the last after-school club, pupils are interested, courteous, friendly and polite. Misbehaviour is very rare, and this is confirmed in the school's behaviour records.
- Education is valued highly by pupils. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. Attendance is consistently in line with, or above, national figures. After-school clubs are oversubscribed because children enjoy the many activities on offer such as choir, karate, crafts and reading clubs.
- At prayer times the school falls silent as pupils gather respectfully in different parts of the school.
- Pupils care for and respect their environment. There is no litter or graffiti and they wear their uniform with pride.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All groups of pupils make consistently strong progress in English and mathematics and for some progress is outstanding.
- Standards are well above national figures by the end of Year 6 in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. A higher proportion than is found nationally achieve greater depth in all areas. This represents very good progress from pupils' differing starting points. Over 80% of pupils speak a language other than English at home, so their progress is especially impressive. Progress in other subjects is not as rapid.
- Scrutiny of the work in pupils' books confirms that there are different challenges for different levels of ability and that all groups make strong progress, especially in mathematics, which many pupils identify as their favourite subject.
- Impressive work is seen in English books where pupils demonstrate skills in a variety of different genres such as poetry, play scripts and balanced arguments. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of some of the writing of Shakespeare by explaining some of his more complex metaphors.
- Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are confident readers. In Year 2, pupils spoke about the value they place on reading well, saying, 'it gets your brain cleverer' and 'it's healthy'. In Year 6, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their enjoyment of both factual and fiction books. They read with good intonation, enthusiasm and pace.

- The most able pupils demonstrate very strong progress in mathematics, reading and writing because teachers ensure that they are regularly offered greater challenge.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because the school has numerous effective strategies to support their learning. They make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- Girls and boys are generally equally successful and there is little or no gap in their achievements.
- Less written work than might be expected has been completed in subjects other than English. Pupils have limited opportunities to write at length in some parts of the curriculum.
- Pupils have the opportunity to conduct a reasonable number of investigations in science. However, progress is less rapid in science than is the case in mathematics and writing.
- Pupils' good manners, very positive attitudes to learning, high standards and the broad curriculum ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- Children are eager to learn and settle into school life very quickly.
- Children's play is lively, creative and imaginative and has a good balance of sessions led by adults, such as daily phonics and sessions where children choose their own activities. All children quickly become confident learners, keen to talk to visitors.
- Adults take every opportunity to boost literacy and numeracy skills in all activities. Children show good levels of concentration and cooperate well with each other. They happily take turns, for example, on the computers and in using the outdoor equipment.
- Children start with the skills broadly expected for their age and make good progress in Nursery and Reception classes so that they are ready and well prepared for Year 1.
- Learning outdoors is planned to include all the learning areas but not quite as comprehensively as indoor learning. Role play, construction, technology, numeracy, letters and sounds, singing and physical activities are all available outdoors, even on a frosty day. Both Nursery and Reception classes have direct access to outdoors, which was not the case at the previous inspection. Staff understand that children need opportunities to learn in different ways, to explore, use their senses and be physically exuberant and active.
- Assessment is ongoing and accurate. This results in good-quality learning journeys for each child. Learning is shared electronically with parents daily.
- All the welfare and safeguarding requirements are fully met. Staff are vigilant and thorough in all aspects of safety and safeguarding. Parents are highly satisfied with the quality of care and nurture their children receive and the good progress they make in learning.
- The effective new early years leader has quickly identified where and how this good setting can be further improved. She is ambitious and knowledgeable.

School details

Unique reference number	105598
DfE registration number	352/6041
Inspection number	10043368

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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Manchester Islamic Educational Trust Ltd
Chair	Mr Farroukh Zaheer
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Mona Mohamed
Acting Headteacher	Mrs Doris Ghafori-Kanno
Annual fees (day pupils)	Nursery £5,425; Main school £5,200
Telephone number	0161 4455452
Website	www.muslimprepschool.co.uk
Email address	d.ghafori@muslimprepschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–16 October 2015

Information about this school

- Manchester Muslim Preparatory School is an independent primary school which was established in 1994. The school, located in the Withington area of Manchester, is part of Manchester Islamic Educational Trust Ltd, which also runs two secondary schools nearby.
- The school aims to provide a broad and challenging curriculum set within an Islamic ethos which aims to promote high academic and moral standards.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is below average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, while in school, is low. However, over 80% of pupils come from families for whom English is not their principal language at home.
- There have been changes in leadership since the previous inspection. In September 2017 a new executive headteacher and a new acting headteacher took up their posts.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups in a range of subjects. They visited the school's breakfast club, lunchtime and after-school clubs and listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and 6. They looked at the work in pupils' books in all year groups and in many different subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history, geography and topic work.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, the trustees, including the chair and vice-chair, members of staff, groups of pupils and a group of parents.
- They scrutinised all policies and procedures in order to establish the school's compliance with the independent school standards. This included an extensive tour of the school site and review of health and safety documentation.
- The views of staff were gained from the 32 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and from discussions with teachers and other staff in school.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents from the 75 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire and from meeting a group of 15 parents who came into school.
- The inspectors scrutinised the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' progress and attainment, curriculum planning, behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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