

Manchester Islamic High School for Girls

55 High Lane, Chorlton, Manchester M21 9FA

Inspection dates

6–8 March 2019

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The exceptional leadership of the headteacher and staff has ensured that pupils achieve highly and are well prepared to make a valuable contribution to society.
- Leaders have successfully equipped pupils to become highly responsible, considerate and caring British Muslim citizens.
- Trustees and governors champion the school and its outward-looking approach. They make a valuable contribution to school improvement and ensure the highest quality of education for pupils.
- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Progress by the end of key stage 4 is well above pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Leaders and teachers know pupils extremely well. A comprehensive assessment system is used to match activities precisely to pupils' learning needs.
- Teachers have an outstanding ability to ask just the right questions to support pupils to develop their thinking, draw out their learning and challenge them.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning are exemplary. Pupils play an active part in their learning and love to contribute their views and opinions.
- The school provides an engaging and enjoyable curriculum. The excellent enrichment curriculum provides pupils with experiences and participation in an extensive range of activities. It is instrumental in building pupils' confidence, self-esteem and strong sense of identity.
- Pupils benefit from exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils become well rounded, respectful and empathic. They have a strong sense of contributing to the local and wider community through charitable work and random acts of kindness.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are strong and are central to the work of the school. They are confident about how to stay safe personally and online. However, pupils do not always eat as healthily as they could.
- Pupils feel very safe and extremely well looked after in the school. Parents and carers agree.

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 the associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further embed the school's provision for instilling healthy eating habits in pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The proprietor, trustees, leaders and governors have established an exceptional school that is helping to develop young women who have a strong moral purpose and desire to make a valuable contribution to society. As a result, Manchester Islamic High School for Girls is an inspiring place in which to learn.
- The school motto 'Inspiring 21st Century British Muslims' very aptly describes the school. Through the Islamic faith, the school engenders in pupils a strong British Muslim identity and one that believes in contributing to society by actively playing a valuable role in the local, national and international community.
- The school's promotion of equalities and diversity is exceptional. Pupils are highly considerate, respectful and tolerant. Pupils work extremely well in each other's company and benefit from many opportunities to develop consideration of others in the wider community. For example, a group of Year 10 and Year 11 pupils took part in voluntary work in Ghana. They spent time with Ghanaian families and children, teaching lessons to pupils with special educational needs. They also relished the opportunity to contribute to building a library by painting classrooms and building book cases. When they returned, they visited local primary schools to share their experiences.
- The leadership team is experienced and knowledgeable. Leaders accurately identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their reflective, proactive approach is evident in a detailed evaluation and school development plan. This outlines precisely how leaders will address those areas needing further attention. Leaders have developed strong, effective systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- The proprietor, trustees, senior leaders and the local board of governors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met to a high standard.
- The school has developed a highly effective system to assess pupils' attainment and progress. It is used successfully to assess each individual pupil's needs. The information gathered allows leaders to analyse pupils' progress regularly.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum which pupils find highly engaging. They benefit from a full range of predominantly academic subjects. Wherever possible, their learning is applied to real-life activities and projects. For example, as part of a citizenship GCSE, pupils annually organise and run a diversity afternoon for local primary school pupils. Pupils learn about the Muslim way of life in different countries and have the chance to ask questions, taste food and immerse themselves in another culture.
- The school offers a particularly strong enrichment curriculum. In Year 7, pupils attend an outdoor residential course, and in Year 10 they can achieve the Duke of Edinburgh award. Pupils go on cultural trips to the theatre, visit court rooms, the Houses of Parliament and have been to the European Parliament in Brussels. Closer to home and as part of a geography and science trip, they visited Chester Zoo. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in sports clubs, such as karate or sports events organised by local football clubs. These opportunities make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem, confidence and sense of identity.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through all the school's activities and is a strength of the school. Pupils are confident and comfortable to talk about a wide range of lifestyles, relationships and faiths. In this regard, pupils are reflective and empathic. They are highly respectful and show humility and tolerance towards other views. Their attitudes and actions embody the essence of British values, such as tolerance, respecting differences and the rule of law. A central principle of the school is the importance of contributing to the local and wider community. Pupils throughout the school raise thousands of pounds for charities as diverse as the local homeless, Islamic relief and the recent disaster in Indonesia. However, they also believe in the importance of contributing to society through their actions. They do this through their Living Islam curriculum. To this end, they have regularly performed random acts of kindness, for example handing out sweet treats to commuters in Euston station on the way back from a trip to London.
- The school does not receive any pupil premium funding nor additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, there are a few pupils who are identified as having SEND. The lead for the provision for pupils who have SEND has been very effective in identifying and responding to the additional learning needs of pupils and allocating suitable support within the school.
- The school benefits from a close working relationship with the other two schools in the Manchester Islamic Educational Trust. They share practice and expertise. The headteacher of the girls' school is also the executive headteacher for the primary and boys' school. Leaders play an active and influential role in local educational groups.

Governance

- Trustees and members of the local governing body share a whole-hearted commitment to maximising pupils' academic, social and emotional outcomes. They are passionate about the school and give unwavering support to the headteacher in order to preserve the school's outward-looking ethos.
- Trustees and governors use the range of their experience and expertise to good effect. They fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and provide appropriate challenge to leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness and make an active contribution to the life of the school.
- Trustees and governors know the school very well and ensure that it remains compliant with all independent school standards. They support the headteacher in holding staff to account.
- Trustees and governors are diligent in carrying out their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are compliant and fit for purpose. Leaders demonstrate a thorough commitment and a high degree of knowledge of all matters relating to safeguarding and welfare.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in the school. Leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from a safe and secure environment by promoting the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Leaders maintain detailed safeguarding records. Staff, senior leaders, the local governing body and trustees undertake regular and appropriate training, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents on request. It is also available on the school's website.
- The school's pastoral support is excellent. Staff, overseen by the pastoral lead, coordinate every aspect of the care for pupils and their families.
- Leaders are very aware of the vulnerability of some of the pupils in their care. They are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Good relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers show a passion for their subject, have a thorough knowledge of their subject area and are committed to providing the best education possible for pupils. The vast majority of pupils embody the same passion and thirst for learning. This has led to attainment and progress being exceptional.
- Teachers are encouraged to add their individual flair to their approach, but all teaching has common features. It is characterised by friendly, warm relationships between staff and pupils. Staff model and reinforce high expectations for pupils' learning and their behaviour. This fosters in pupils a strong sense of purpose and a desire to engage actively in their learning.
- Teachers provide pupils with well-prepared, motivating activities, which capture their interest. The skilful questioning of pupils draws out learning and encourages pupils to think and reason. This deepens their knowledge and understanding. Teachers also successfully challenge pupils of all abilities through their questioning. This supports pupils to make links between different areas of learning, which deepens their understanding further.
- All teachers encourage pupils to discuss and talk about their learning. Many activities include an opportunity to share ideas and reflect on what they know, applying their knowledge to gain new understanding and insight. This also demonstrates pupils' excellent social skills, including listening, team work and encouraging each other. For example, when a pupil has done something well or grappled successfully with a misconception, classmates will, unprompted, congratulate her.
- The information gathered about pupils is detailed. Teachers use it precisely to ensure that tasks are sufficiently well matched to the individual pupil's ability and learning needs.

Feedback is often immediate. For example, in mathematics a pupil was struggling with algebraic equations. It is clear from a scrutiny of her workbook that the teacher had sat with the pupil and explained carefully the misunderstanding. By the end of the activity, the pupil had not only mastered her task but had moved on to complete successfully more complicated work. No time is wasted before offering a pupil an opportunity to improve their work further, so they can move on in their learning.

- The development of pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills is a high priority in the school. Teachers make links effectively with a wide range of subjects that pupils are offered across the curriculum. Teachers often plan special days to emphasise cross-curricular links, for example in science, mathematics and geography when looking at climates in different parts of the world. In addition, pupils are often heard to make their own links confidently across the curriculum.
- Reading is of a particularly high quality across the school. Pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about how they are keen to read at home and in the school. Reading has a high profile. Pupils are offered many opportunities to read a wide range of books and explore links in what they have read. For example, when reading 'The Diary of Anne Frank', pupils independently made links to war poetry and Shakespearean plays.
- Pupils say they really enjoy their learning and particularly like the opportunities they have to put their learning into action through the projects and the wide range of extra-curricular subjects they are offered. Pupils also talked with inspectors about how much they appreciated their 'excellent teachers'. They also said they 'know that teachers dedicate their time to help them be the best they can be'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Both are integral to the work of the school. Teachers' and other adults' thorough knowledge of pupils and the strong relationships they build ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils excel.
- High-quality personal development for pupils is central to the school's approach. This, closely linked to cultivating their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is a striking feature of the school. 'This school has taught me to hold my head up high' is a typical sentiment from pupils of all ages.
- Respect and valuing others are conspicuous drivers for pupils. These attributes radiate through pupils' words and actions. For example, immediately following the bombing incident at Manchester Arena, pupils courageously and selflessly decided to go to the local town centre and hand out single roses to passers-by, as an act of solidarity with the victims and families.
- Staff and pupils openly and confidently discuss differences in people and lifestyles. Pupils of all ages respond with maturity and empathy for others, showing an exceptional degree of thoughtfulness, understanding and care for each other and the wider community.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves healthy and are well informed about the importance of exercise and good emotional and mental health. For example,

the school council recently set up a garden area to enable pupils to have time for quiet reflection. Although pupils are very aware of what constitutes healthy eating, some find it more difficult to put this knowledge into practice, particularly over sugary items, such as sweets and chocolate.

- Pupils spoken with during the inspection are clear about what bullying is and say incidents are very rare. They are very confident that teachers directly and effectively deal with the infrequent cases of unkind or negative language. Pupils are unanimous in their view that they feel safe in the school and know how to keep themselves safe personally and online.
- Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious about their future careers, buoyed by the school's ethos of 'the possibility of achieving anything you set your mind to' and the ingrained belief in the importance of making a contribution to society. The curriculum ensures that pupils develop work-related skills and benefit from a range of visitors who talk with pupils about different careers. The attitudes and behaviour they abundantly demonstrate during their time in the school have a significant impact on the choice of their career. These careers range from being a doctor, lawyer or police officer to working as a humanitarian or diplomat.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke with the inspector or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, feel their daughter is happy and well looked after in school. Many say the school is like an 'extension of their family'. They consider the school does a 'magnificent' job at developing their daughters' moral purpose. Many say the opportunities their daughters get to experience are 'amazing'. They are happy the school is helping to develop their daughters to be 'proud British Muslims'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Pupils rise to high expectations of behaviour and conduct themselves impeccably.
- Pupils make a significant contribution to the welcoming, respectful feel of the school, which is a calm, orderly place where pupils feel very safe and able to thrive.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and their school. They are delightfully polite and well mannered. They greet each other, teachers and visitors with a warm smile and are quick to compliment or ask how someone is feeling. Pupils are very happy to engage in conversations with adults; they do this in an interested, open and articulate manner. Staff and pupils know each other very well and are friendly, supportive and encouraging.
- Pupils can be bubbly and exuberant at breaktimes but are quick to settle when it is time to return to class. Pupils consider behaving well to be very important. They are fully aware of how to behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. They say incidents of inappropriate behaviour are very rare and dealt with quickly by teachers.
- Pupils' attitude to learning is exceptional. They pride themselves in being studious and hard working. They say they feel they take an active part in their learning. For example, teachers regularly encourage them to lead an aspect of learning or to contribute their views and opinions. Pupils rise to this with assurance and gusto.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. The systems for checking on attendance and punctuality are rigorous and effective. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Many pupils join the school in Year 7 with skills, knowledge and understanding similar to other pupils of their age. The large majority of pupils make very strong progress. This has led to attainment well above the national averages by the time they leave school at the end of Year 11. The school's in-year tracking of progress and the work in pupils' books confirm that pupils are making strongly sustained progress.
- By the end of key stage 4, pupils achieve excellent results in GCSE, with almost all pupils attaining good passes. In 2017 and 2018, around half of the pupils achieved the top grades in all their GCSE examinations, including biology, chemistry, physics, further mathematics, business and communication studies, Arabic and English literature.
- Pupils make exceptional progress during their time at the school. At the end of key stage 4 in 2018, pupils attained almost a grade higher than pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Pupils with SEND also make outstanding progress from their starting points. Teachers know pupils extremely well and provide them with exemplary support to ensure each pupil has the appropriate resources to help them progress in their learning.
- Pupils of all ages are articulate and are actively encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding to expand their own learning. Pupils are keen, inquisitive and constantly engaged in conversation with their peers and teachers to gain a deeper and broader understanding.
- The school ensures that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. All pupils are encouraged to be ambitious and to explore their aspirations. They are supported to make informed decisions about how to pursue their goals for the future. Leaders work successfully, drawing on pupils' interests and aspirations, to set up work-experience placements. Almost all pupils go on to appropriate further education.

School details

Unique reference number	130318
DfE registration number	352/6040
Inspection number	10043371

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	Muslim secondary school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Manchester Islamic Educational Trust Limited
Chair	Farroukh Zaheer
Headteacher	Mona Mohamed
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,800
Telephone number	0161 881 2127
Website	www.mihsg.org.uk
Email address	m.mohamed@mihsg.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 September–1 October 2015

Information about this school

- Manchester Islamic High School for Girls can provide full-time education for up to 234 pupils, aged between 11 to 16 years. It presently caters for 216 girls in key stages 3 and 4.
- No pupils have an education, health and care plan for SEND.
- The majority of pupils speak English as a second language, although none are at the early stages of learning English.

- The school aims to deliver 'Islamic Education and the National Curriculum within a caring and nurturing environment, following an Islamic ethos and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)'.
- Manchester Islamic High School for Girls opened in 1991. This school is one of three run by proprietors Manchester Islamic Educational Trust Limited. The headteacher of the Manchester Islamic High School for Girls is also the executive headteacher of the other two schools, Manchester Muslim Prep School and KD Grammar School for Boys. The school has a board of trustees and has recently set up a local governing body. The chair of the trustees is also the chair of the local governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in classes. They also observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They observed pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the two assistant headteachers and the designated lead for safeguarding. They also spoke with heads of department and the person responsible for attendance and maintaining safeguarding checks. They spoke with the lead for the provision for pupils who have SEND.
- The inspector spoke with five trustees and/or governors, who represented the proprietorship of the school and the local governing board. This included the chair of the trustees, who is also the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils around the school and discussed with three groups of pupils their opinions about the school and their learning.
- Inspectors took account of 36 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire Parent View. They also took account of 24 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 61 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire.
- School policies and other documents were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards and to provide other inspection evidence, including minutes from meetings of the trustees, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mavis Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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