

Inspection of Afifah School

86 Clifton Street, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 9GN

Inspection dates: 5–7 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers are proud of the school and its Islamic ethos. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to succeed socially and academically. Pupils appreciate the high expectations that their teachers have of them. This is illustrated in comments such as: 'I am motivated to learn and I always feel appreciated. This is because my teachers and fellow students care, are loving and believe in me.'

The school's curriculum is ambitious. Pupils enjoy the wide range of subjects it offers. Pupils develop a love of literature and reading. Teachers provide interesting lessons that help all pupils to achieve well.

Pupils enjoy taking part in the range of opportunities that widen their experiences. These include museum trips, external speakers and visits to employment fairs. Roles such as school councillor or membership of the Shura help pupils to develop their self-confidence well. Pupils also take on responsibilities as prefects. Some run the lunchtime book club.

Pupils' conduct around the school is impeccable. They are happy and safe. Most pupils are avid learners. Occasionally, some pupils can become distracted in some lessons. Pupils told me that bullying is rare and that staff are quick to deal with it. Pupils told me that they felt safe in school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum, with the national curriculum at its core. The curriculum develops pupils' knowledge by building on what they already know. The school's curriculum is also carefully designed to promote the school's Islamic ethos. It allows pupils to study a range of modern and ancient foreign languages such as Urdu and Arabic.

The early years curriculum is well designed and well taught. It strongly promotes children's achievement in all areas of learning. As a result, children are eager learners and collaborate effectively to overcome the challenges that teachers set for them. Children are well prepared for the next stages of their education. Children have appropriate access to outdoor learning. However, the outdoor provision for pupils in the Reception Year is more limited. It is not as well designed or resourced as the one for the Nursery.

Leadership of specific subjects in the secondary part of the school is of high quality. In the primary part of the school, the oversight of subjects is effective. However, in this phase, curriculum leadership relies primarily on senior leaders and teachers who have interest in the subject. It is not formalised. Leaders are taking appropriate action to enhance subject leadership in the primary part of the school. They are beginning to make better use of the expertise of existing primary staff to help promote curriculum improvement.

Teachers in all areas of the school are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. Teachers share a commitment to do the best for all pupils and have high expectations of them. Teachers plan sequences of lessons that are interesting. These lessons improve pupils' knowledge by building on what they already know. For example, secondary pupils studying cell biology start by learning about basic cell structure first. They then move on to learn about cell organelles such as mitochondria.

Teachers use their assessments of pupils well. They match the challenge of tasks to pupils' abilities effectively. Teachers frequently check what pupils know and remember. For example, in computer science, teachers make effective use of questioning. This allows them to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and adapt their teaching accordingly. On occasions primary teachers do not make the best choice of how they will teach aspects of the curriculum. This can lead to a small number of pupils becoming disengaged. Leaders are aware of this issue. Plans show that leaders are taking appropriate actions to resolve this.

Leaders know how important reading is for pupils to be able to succeed in life. Pupils get a good start in reading. This is because well-trained and knowledgeable staff deliver good phonics teaching from Reception. Pupils quickly gain a secure understanding of phonics and become fluent readers. By the time that pupils leave the school they develop a love of reading. They use their wide vocabulary to become confident communicators. Pupils' tastes in literature are diverse. They range from romantic fiction to horror-fantasy and poetry.

Pupils' attendance is in line with national averages and has improved over time. Leaders ensure that registers are well maintained and that they adhere to requirements.

Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects including reading, English mathematics and science. Pupils, including those in early years and primary, are well prepared for their next stages of education. The proportion of secondary-aged pupils who attain good passes in at least five GCSEs is above national average each year. The school's attainment 8 score for pupils' outcomes in GCSE examinations was above the national average.

Parents are well informed about their children's achievements through detailed reports and opportunities to meet staff. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Pupils say that bullying is rare.

Pupils receive good impartial advice and guidance about careers. This allows them to make informed choices about their futures. Pupils are aspirational. Some told me they want to become pharmacologists, ethical hackers or human rights lawyers. Nearly all pupils go on to further education, while a small number gain employment in apprenticeships.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about the wider world. They learn about different religions and make mature comparisons to their own Islamic faith. Pupils

experience a wide range of cultural visits and visitors that are linked to their studies. Pupils play an active part in charitable activities within their community. These include sharing their Islamic culture with pupils who visit from other schools.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietors and staff share a commitment to keep pupils safe. Proprietors have ensured that all the required checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils have been completed. Records are meticulous and fit for purpose. Leaders work closely with other authorities. Leaders share information with the right people to protect pupils from harm. Well-trained staff have up-to-date knowledge. Staff are vigilant to protect pupils from the risk of harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- A minority of primary teachers do not select the most effective teaching strategies for their pupils. Occasionally their chosen strategies result in some pupils disengaging from their learning. Leaders must further enhance primary teachers' knowledge of effective teaching strategies to maximise pupils' learning and engagement.
- Leadership of the curriculum in the primary part of the school is effective but overly reliant on senior leaders. Leaders should build on their actions to strengthen subject leadership in the primary phase by making best use of the subject expertise and interests of staff.
- The outdoor provision for children in Reception is not as well developed as that for Nursery children. Outdoor space in Nursery is limited but well resourced. Adults plan carefully how they use this space in Nursery. This maximises the opportunities for children to learn. Leaders should now further improve the outdoor learning opportunities for children in the Reception Year.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	134469
DfE registration number	358/6018
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10112069
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Afifah Academy
Headteacher	Abdul Malek
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,875 secondary £3,150 primary and pre-school
Telephone number	0161 872 1516
Website	www.afifahschool.com
Email address	admin@afifahschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–16 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school's aim is to develop 'every student's mind, body and soul, by promoting academic progress and nurturing their intellectual, physical, spiritual and social potential for the benefit of the wider community'.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has developed two new classrooms above the hall. These classrooms have appropriate equipment, lighting and acoustics to support effective teaching.
- The school is currently operating beyond its registered capacity.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- During the inspection, we looked in detail at reading, mathematics, computing and science. This involved discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and discussions with pupils. We also listened to pupils read.
- We spoke with a trustee of the proprietorial body, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. We also met with the teachers responsible for the early years and the special educational needs coordinator.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the checks carried out during the appointment of staff. We also looked at records of pupils' attendance. In addition, documentation and information relating to the independent school standards were also scrutinised.
- We spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the school day and considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including the four free-text comments. We also considered the 30 responses to the online staff survey and eight responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Morgan

Ofsted Inspector

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