

Inspection of Rochdale Islamic Academy for Girls

Greenbank Road, Rochdale OL12 0HZ

Inspection dates: 29 June–1 July 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are friendly and well mannered. They are happy to attend Rochdale Islamic Academy for Girls and are well equipped to make a valuable contribution to British society.

Adults have high expectations of pupils. Pupils thrive and most achieve well, both personally and academically. Many go on to further education and professional careers.

Behaviour around school is a strength. Pupils are polite, thoughtful and hard-working. They are considerate and caring towards each other. Pupils say bullying is extremely rare. If it should happen, pupils know that adults will deal with any issues immediately.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They know adults look after and care for them. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. This includes when using the internet or social media.

The Islamic ethos is a golden thread woven through all aspects of school life. Pupils are confident to talk about diversity and the importance of respect and tolerance for different people, cultures and religions. Teachers act as role models for pupils and make sure that pupils learn about other successful women in our society.

Parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school. They say that their children are happy. Many feel that the positive and encouraging atmosphere created in school helps their children to flourish.

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

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. Staff think about the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need to succeed academically. They have thought about the order of learning so that it helps pupils remember important information. Staff have created a curriculum which prepares pupils well for the future.

The curriculum is well planned in most subjects, including English, mathematics, science, Urdu, physical education (PE) and art and design. However, a small number of subjects, such as geography and computing, are slightly less well-developed than others. In these subjects, leaders have not planned the curriculum as well as they should do to reflect pupils' starting points. This is hindering some pupils' ability to get the most out of the ambitious curriculum offered.

Teachers are knowledgeable. Their passion and commitment are evident in their daily teaching. Teachers explain things clearly. In most subjects, pupils revisit and recap important learning. Teachers help pupils to remember important information and to make connections between different concepts and topics. For example, in

English, pupils confidently explore themes within novels and correctly interpret the text for meaning.

Reading is a priority for the school. Pupils can choose books to read from a varied and high-quality supply of texts. Leaders have identified a small number of pupils that are struggling with their reading. This means that these pupils are not learning all the subjects in the curriculum as well as they could do. Teachers do not have enough knowledge about early reading to support those struggling with their reading to catch up.

Leaders want everyone to achieve their very best. Teachers are quick to notice any pupils who struggle with their learning. They adapt their teaching to support these pupils. Leaders have identified pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The majority of these pupils are being supported in their learning. However, there are a few pupils with SEND who are not being assessed precisely enough to allow leaders to fully understand their specific needs and help them to learn better.

Pupils are polite, courteous and very respectful toward each other and adults. They are studious and hard-working. Overall, pupils have a positive attitude towards their studies. A few are slightly hesitant in their engagement and lack confidence in contributing in lessons. Pupils know how to spot bullying. They said it is very unusual in school. If it does occur, adults act to stop it straight away.

Pupils receive comprehensive support for their mental health. Pupils speak very positively about how adults help them with their well-being. They also like the opportunities that they have to develop personally and physically. For example, pupils benefit from participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Many pupils enjoy joining yoga and self-defence classes.

Pupils receive a wide range of information, careers advice and guidance. This builds over time so that pupils are well prepared, by Year 11, to make informed decisions about their future. Many pupils go on to further education and careers in teaching, medicine, the law or science.

The building is well maintained, clean and well resourced. There is outdoor space for pupils to get fresh air at breaktimes. The outdoor space is also suitable for the twice-weekly PE sessions.

Leaders ensure that they follow all health and safety requirements, including fire regulations and risk assessments. Leaders keep parents well informed about the work of the school. Policies are available to parents and others on the school's website. The complaints policy is fully compliant. The school has a suitable plan that describes how pupils with a disability can fully take part in the school's curriculum.

The chair of the board of trustees and the governing body ensure that the independent school standards are met. Trustees and governors play an effective part in ensuring that school leaders are held to account for the quality of the curriculum.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel they are well supported by leaders, governors and trustees.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a caring and nurturing ethos in the school. The safeguarding of pupils is prioritised by all staff. Leaders make sure that all policies and procedures are in place and that everyone knows them in detail. The record that outlines the checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils is complete and fully compliant.

Leaders are confident to act if they are concerned about a pupil. There is strong pastoral care available. Staff ensure that pupils and their families are well looked after and supported.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The vast majority of curriculum subjects are planned well. However, some subjects are less developed than other subjects. Pupils do not achieve as highly in these subjects as in other curriculum areas. Leaders need to develop further the planning of these subjects so that they include the key knowledge they want pupils to learn, in order. This will ensure that pupils learn more and remember more across the full range of subjects.
- Leaders have successfully identified those pupils who are struggling to read. However, teachers do not have enough knowledge about early reading to support those struggling with their reading to help them catch up quickly. Leaders need to train staff in the teaching of early reading so that these pupils become fluent readers and can fully access the curriculum that the school offers.
- Leaders have identified pupils with SEND and support them effectively. A small number of pupils have very specific SEND needs, requiring a deeper level of understanding. Leaders should identify the exact needs of these pupils so that they can be supported to learn more and remember more across all subjects.

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 are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	147662
DfE registration number	354/6039
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10193267
Type of school	Islamic faith school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Proprietor	Muslim Education Association
Chair	Mr Sohail Ahmed
Headteacher	Ms Mehnaz Kauser
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,000
Telephone number	01706 710184
Website	www.rochdaleislamicacademy.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@riag.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Rochdale Islamic Academy for Girls opened in March 2020. This followed the separation of the former Rochdale Islamic Academy, a mixed school, into two separate schools, one for boys and one for girls.
- The current headteacher was appointed in January 2020 as the headteacher of the girls' division of the previous mixed school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, and the overall curriculum lead. Inspectors also spoke to staff who focus on safeguarding arrangements.
- An inspector spoke with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board, and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the independent school standards, the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors considered the three responses to Ofsted Parent View and also the 24 responses to a recent school questionnaire sent out to parents for their views.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's staff survey, but inspectors spoke to members of staff about safeguarding, well-being and workload during the inspection.
- There were 50 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their work, school life and the books that they like to read.
- Inspectors looked in detail at English, science, geography, and computing. For each of these subjects, inspectors held discussions with leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and talked to pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pippa Jackson Maitland

Her Majesty's Inspector

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