

Inspection of Markazul Uloom

Park Lee Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 3NY

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 October 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **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 are proud to be at Markazul Uloom. Describing the school as 'a blessing' was a common sentiment expressed by pupils.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. They expect every pupil to achieve well and are successful at making this happen. Pupils value their education and they told inspectors that they love learning. Many pupils go on to further education.

Behaviour in school is exemplary. Pupils are particularly well mannered and thoughtful individuals. They are considerate towards each other. Pupils said that bullying is extremely rare. If it should happen, pupils know that adults will deal with any issues immediately.

Pupils feel happy, safe and well supported in school. They know adults look after and care for them. Pupils said that they learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online.

The Islamic ethos is a golden thread woven through all aspects of school life. Pupils are confident and knowledgeable to talk about diversity. Teachers ensure that pupils are well equipped to make a valuable contribution to British society.

Parents and carers are pleased with the quality of education. They said that their children thrive. This is because of the positive and encouraging atmosphere created by staff in the school.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and how to get the best out of pupils. They have ensured that the curriculum is well planned in most subjects. The majority of curriculum plans set out in detail the knowledge that teachers will teach, and in what order. In the subjects that are very well planned, staff think carefully about the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need to succeed academically. However, a very small number of curriculum plans are less well developed than others.

In those subjects that are slightly less well planned, the order of the knowledge that teachers want pupils to learn is not as clear as it should be. This is hindering some pupils' ability to get the most out of the curriculum on offer. Even so, pupils achieve well at Markazul Uloom. This is because, overall, staff have created a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum which prepares pupils well to be successful in the future.

Teachers are knowledgeable, passionate and committed. Teachers explain things clearly to pupils. They help pupils to remember more of subjects by making connections between different concepts, topics and real-life experiences. In most subjects, pupils revisit and recap important learning. However, on occasions,

teachers do not use the assessment information that they have about pupils as well as they could to check pupils' understanding and inform future learning.

Pupils learning to become fluent readers is a priority for leaders. Pupils can choose books to read from a well-stocked library. Pupils are expected to develop their reading knowledge, and subject-specific vocabulary, in every lesson. Leaders have identified a very small number of pupils who are struggling with their reading fluency. They have plans in place to support those struggling with their reading to catch up quickly.

Leaders and teachers want everyone to achieve their very best. Teachers are quick to notice any pupils who struggle with their learning. Teachers successfully adapt their teaching to support these pupils.

The school has a special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) coordinator. However, leaders do not presently have any pupils in school identified as SEND. Even so, leaders do know how to identify and support pupils with SEND.

Pupils are extremely polite, courteous and very respectful towards each other and adults. The school is a harmonious and spiritual environment in which pupils can learn. Pupils are studious and eager learners.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive personal, social and economic health curriculum. This includes a good range of support to help pupils deal with any mental health and relationship issues. Pupils contribute to teacher-led opportunities which provide help to the local community. They raise money for charity and litter pick. However, pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to use their own initiative as active citizens to contribute positively to wider society.

Pupils receive a wide range of appropriate careers information, 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 or science.

The building is well maintained, clean and appropriately resourced. There is outdoor space for pupils to get fresh air at break times. The outdoor space is also suitable for the regular physical education 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, including the school's safeguarding policy, are available to parents and others in the school prospectus and upon request. The complaints policy is fully compliant. The school has a suitable plan that describes how pupils with a disability can take part fully in the school's curriculum.

The proprietor body ensures that the independent school standards are met. Trustees hold regular meetings. They play an effective part in ensuring that school leaders are held to account for the quality of education that the school provides.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that they are well supported by leaders and trustees, including with managing their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders and staff appropriately prioritise the safeguarding and protection of all pupils. Leaders ensure that all required policies and procedures are in place and that everyone knows how to put them into practice.

Staff are well trained in how to spot pupils who may be at risk of harm. They act quickly if they are concerned about a pupil. Pupils are supported well in school and timely referrals are made to external agencies, when required.

Adults teach pupils how to stay safe and behave responsibly in different situations. This includes when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a very small number of subjects, leaders have not planned precisely enough what pupils should learn and in what order. Pupils do not achieve as highly in these subjects as in other curriculum areas. Leaders should revise the curriculum content in these remaining few subjects to ensure that teachers know exactly what knowledge pupils must learn.
- Teachers regularly assess what pupils know and understand. However, they do not always use this information as well as they should. As a result, some pupils' misunderstandings are not addressed quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers use the assessment information that they gather to check pupils' understanding and inform how they adapt curriculum plans in response to any misconceptions.
- Although pupils do some activities to support local charities and causes, they are not offered sufficient opportunities to use their own initiative to make a positive contribution to the local and wider community. This hampers some pupils' wider personal development. Leaders should explore more ways to encourage pupils to become proactive citizens who make a positive difference to the local and wider community.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	133541
DfE registration number	889/6009
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10203795
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Proprietor	Markazul Uloom
Chair	Muhammad Bilal Bawa
Headteacher	Sajid Bargit
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,500
Telephone number	01254 660026
Website	None
Email address	info@muloom.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 to 6 July 2017

Information about this school

- Since the previous standard inspection in July 2017, the school had an emergency inspection in September 2019. It was found that pupils were separated by sex unlawfully during their education and social time. As a result, several of the independent school standards (the standards) were not met. In response, the proprietor body decided to change the mixed school into two separate schools – one for boys and one for girls.
- The proprietor body applied to the Department for Education for a separate registration to create a girls school, Noorul Uloom. A pre-registration inspection was carried out in December 2019. At the same time, Markazul Uloom had a material change inspection to become a school for boys only.
- At the time of the December 2019 material change inspection, several of the standards were not met, particularly relating to the premises. The building was in use prior to this inspection.
- Markazul Uloom now operates solely as a boys school.
- The school is part-way through a building programme to provide new facilities for boys in a refurbished building. Leaders expect this work will be completed around March 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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, inspectors spoke with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also spoke to staff, focusing on leaders' safeguarding arrangements.
- An inspector spoke with a member of the board of trustees, who also represented the proprietor body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the standards, the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and spoke to members of staff about their well-being and workload.

- There were no responses to the pupil survey. However, inspectors spoke with most pupils about their work, school life and the books that they like to read.
- Inspectors looked in detail at English, mathematics, science and history. 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

Ahmed Marikar

Her Majesty's Inspector

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