

Inspection of North Road Academy

North Road, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2BP

Inspection dates: 28 February to 2 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy, nurturing and inclusive school. Pupils are safe and well cared for. They have excellent manners and are respectful towards their friends, staff and visitors. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards learning. Bullying is not tolerated. On the rare occasions when bullying occurs, leaders deal with it effectively.

The Islamic faith is at the heart of the school. Pupils are proud of their faith. They talked with pride about studying Islamic studies and Arabic. Pupils are extremely tolerant. They are taught to respect other cultures, faiths and backgrounds, and they do.

Leaders have ensured that pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum. They are ambitious and have significantly improved the school's curriculum. However, some of the changes to the curriculum are new and have not been consistently implemented across the school. This means that pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of motivating extracurricular opportunities, for example in poetry, cricket, boxing and mosaic clubs. Pupils also have the opportunity to debate and learn to speak publicly in gavel club and to run a business in entrepreneur club. These opportunities have been carefully considered by leaders to develop pupils' confidence, skills and talents.

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

The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has a clear moral purpose. He is determined to ensure that all pupils are equipped to be responsible, high-achieving British Muslim citizens. Staff share this vision.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that covers a broad range of subjects. Since the previous inspection, leaders have identified areas for development in the curriculum. They have begun to identify the key knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. However, this is less secure across subjects in the primary phase. This means that pupils do not build a secure understanding in these subjects.

Teachers' subject knowledge is variable. Some teachers have strong subject and pedagogical knowledge, but this is not consistent across the school and across subjects. When teachers' subject knowledge is secure, they carefully identify and address pupils' misconceptions. However, when this is not the case, assessment strategies are not used effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Therefore, gaps are not addressed and misconceptions remain. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Reading is given a high priority across the school. Leaders recognised that during the COVID-19 restrictions, pupils got out of the habit of reading. Leaders have

introduced ways to encourage pupils to read more frequently. For example, pupils take part in reading competitions and have regular visits from authors. Leaders have identified the books pupils will study during their time in school. Older pupils are now starting to read more fluently and confidently.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics curriculum to help improve the way in which reading is taught to younger pupils. They have invested in books that are well matched to the phonic sounds pupils are learning. However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is implemented consistently and effectively. Despite having training, some staff do not have a strong enough subject knowledge of phonics. Therefore, staff do not identify and address misconceptions quickly enough. This means that some pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they could.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. The special educational needs coordinator works with staff to make adaptations to activities so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. For those pupils with significant needs, a bespoke curriculum is put in place that focuses on the needs of individual pupils. However, at times, the curriculum is not broken down into small enough steps, which means that these pupils do not progress as quickly as they could.

Children in Reception settle quickly into school. They play well with each other and develop positive relationships. This was demonstrated by children taking turns to use equipment and sharing resources with each other. Children learn how to eat healthily and about the importance of exercise.

Leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next phase of education or employment. Pupils enjoy the opportunities available to learn about different careers. Older pupils complete work experience and say that this helps to prepare them for possible future careers.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development is at the heart of everything they do. All pupils learn about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. Through both Islamic studies and personal, social and health education, pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Leaders deliberately break down barriers and challenge stereotypes. For example, they invited a local secondary school to work with their pupils and visit the school's mosque. As a result, pupils are well prepared to thrive in modern Britain.

Pupils enjoy trips, taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and have positions of responsibility. Even the youngest pupils benefit by being a classroom monitor. Pupils in Year 5 work with the police to become Junior Cadets. Pupils learn about and understand the impact of anti-social behaviour and knife crime, and how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attendance. Pupils rise to these expectations. The school's Islamic values underpin the school's ethos. Pupils are taught to be kind and respectful. Poor behaviour is very rare. If it does occur,

leaders address any issues quickly. They then support pupils to think about the impact of their behaviour.

Leaders consider staff workload and well-being when making decisions. Staff are very positive about their workload. They feel respected and appreciate what leaders do to support their well-being.

The proprietor has an unwavering determination to ensure that the school prepares pupils well both academically and socially. Recent changes to the curriculum have begun to have some impact on the quality of pupils' education, but these improvements are inconsistent and are not embedded. Therefore, the proprietor has not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Unmet standards relate to the quality of education and leadership and management.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know pupils and their families well. They are vigilant to any changes in the behaviour of individual pupils and the signs that may suggest that a pupil could be at risk of harm. All staff are well trained in the school's safeguarding procedures. Record-keeping is detailed, and leaders ensure that actions to protect pupils are timely.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They learn about the risks in the local area, such as knife crime and anti-social behaviour. They also explore topics such as harmful relationships, peer pressure and substance misuse.

The school's safeguarding policy is written in line with the latest statutory guidance and is available online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have not ensured that the school's phonics curriculum is well implemented for all pupils. Some teachers promote misconceptions, and pupils' errors are not always corrected. This does not help all pupils to learn to read quickly and fluently. Leaders should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to deliver the school's phonics curriculum well.
- Leaders have not ensured that professional development for staff focuses on subject knowledge as well as subject pedagogy. This means that staff do not plan, adapt and assess learning that always supports pupils to progress well.

Leaders need to ensure that professional development addresses both subject knowledge and pedagogy more systematically, so that staff are more confident in both what and how they teach.

- Leaders have not fully considered what subject content they want pupils to know and remember in some subjects and year groups. This hinders pupils' understanding, and they do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that they identify what pupils need to know and remember in each subject and across each year group.
- For some pupils with SEND, the curriculum is not broken down into manageable steps. This means that teachers plan work that does not build systematically on what pupils can already do. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum for these pupils is broken down into smaller chunks, so that they can learn more successfully.
- Some subject leaders have not had the opportunity to monitor the impact of the curriculum in their subjects. This means that leaders are not clear about how recent changes in their subjects impact on pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders are given the training and opportunity to monitor the impact of their subject curriculum.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	139071
DfE registration number	861/6008
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10254668
Type of school	Muslim faith school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Naeem Bashir
Chair	Imran Siddique
Headteacher	Naeem Bashir
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,000
Telephone number	01782 829870
Website	www.northroadacademy.com
Email address	admin@northroadacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	16 to 18 October 2018

Information about this school

- North Road Academy is a mixed, independent Muslim faith school that accepts pupils from Reception to Year 11.
- There is a separate Nursery on site that is also managed by the same proprietor.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The most recent full standard inspection of the school was in October 2018.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that in relation to safeguarding and information relating to the standards. They looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a known adult.
- The lead inspector toured the premises to review the suitability of the accommodation.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the views of staff recorded in Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Hermitt

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(f) where the school has pupils below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills;
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently

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