

# Markazul Uloom

Park Lee Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 3NY

**Inspection date**

3 October 2024

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraphs 2(1)–2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)*

- At the standard inspection in April 2024, inspectors found that the curriculum in some subjects were not well-designed, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In these subjects, there was a lack of clarity about the knowledge that pupils should learn. In addition, the curriculum was found to lack breadth. For example, in key stage 4, pupils were not provided with aesthetic and creative education. Nor did these pupils receive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, age-appropriate relationships, and sex education (RSE) or health education. Additionally, pupils at the school were found not to receive suitable careers education. These weaknesses limited pupils' readiness for the next stage in their learning and for future life.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in August 2024, it was judged that leaders' plans to improve the quality of education for pupils regarding the curriculum were not sufficient to meet this standard.
- The school has worked hard to improve the quality of education provision for pupils, including those with SEND, since the previous inspection in April 2024. The school's focus, in the first instance, has been on addressing the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and premises issues that needed urgent and immediate attention. Despite this, there is evidence that the school has made some positive progress in addressing the unmet standards in this part.
- The school has revised its curriculum policy to reflect the full breadth of curriculum experiences that pupils must have, particularly those in key stage 4. This now includes aesthetic and creative education. Pupils are timetabled for regular sessions in this aspect of the curriculum. However, the associated scheme of work has not been fully developed. It lacks thought about exactly what the school wants pupils to learn during sessions and over the time that pupils are at the school. The school still needs to

consider the curriculum design specific to the individual needs of pupils, including those with SEND.

- Key stage 4 pupils now receive a PSHE education. This is taught through timetabled lessons. The topics covered are suitably wide-ranging, however, again, the school is still developing the scheme of work. In some areas of this curriculum, the school has not finalised exactly what it is going to teach. For example, the curriculum will pay particular regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010, but some of the content of these sessions are not finalised because the school is thinking through how these sessions will reflect their faith.
- The new key stage 4 PSHE education curriculum does include the development of pupils' understanding of RSE and health education. The school has taken into consideration the relevant statutory guidance. It has consulted parents and carers regarding their policy statement.
- The school now has a careers policy. It details the offer that it will deliver to all pupils including those that are in key stage 4. Pupils receive weekly sessions on aspects of careers education. They are offered impartial advice and guidance. A range of guest speakers have presented to pupils. Pupils particularly enjoyed a careers fair organised by the local authority where they learnt about a broad range of career options. There have been some opportunities for work experience. This is an area that the school would like to continue to develop.
- Overall, the independent school standards (the standards) checked in this part remain unmet.

### Part 3. Welfare, health, and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1)(c)*

- At the standard inspection in April 2024, inspectors found the culture and practice of safeguarding in the school to be weak. Despite receiving training, many staff did not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep pupils safe. The administrative aspects of safeguarding were poor. Records of concerns were not kept. Information regarding pupils at risk of harm could not be connected. Checks on visitors were insufficient. Leaders kept no accurate record of the identity of adults who were on the premises, nor whether they were suitable to work with children.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May 2024, it was judged that leaders' plans to improve the culture and practice of safeguarding would address these standards.
- The proprietor has paid attention to the current statutory guidance for safeguarding pupils. The culture and practice of safeguarding is greatly improved. It is responsive, well informed and dealt with in earnest. A suitable and up-to-date safeguarding policy is in place and is made available to parents and carers.
- There has been a wide range of training for both the designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and all staff. Leaders have embraced local authority support. Leaders and staff talk confidently about safeguarding, their responsibilities, and the signs that pupils may be at risk. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. These are responded to by DSLs appropriately. Record-keeping has greatly improved with concern forms filled in in detail and actions logged. The DSLs meet weekly to discuss any

incidents or concerns so that they have an overview of safeguarding in school and can pick up on any wider concerns either in terms of welfare or safeguarding.

- Checks on visitors are appropriate. They are required to sign in and out of the school, they are asked for proof of identity and provided with a lanyard verifying that they have been suitably vetted.
- The proprietor has ensured that all the necessary arrangements to keep pupils safe at the school are in place.

*Paragraphs 9, 9(b), 9(c), 10*

- At the standard inspection in April 2024, inspectors found that the school's systems to record and analyse any patterns of poor behaviour were insufficient to enable leaders to take effective action to tackle them. Additionally, a small number of pupils told inspectors about the bad language and bullying that they experienced when pupils were left unsupervised at breaktimes. Staff were unaware of these incidents of bullying and poor behaviour.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May 2024, it was judged that leaders' plans to improve behaviour and bullying in school were not sufficient to meet this standard.
- Leaders have revised the behaviour and anti-bullying policy. It is detailed and appropriate. A member of staff has been appointed as a behaviour and anti-bullying officer. Pupils are confident that they can go to him if they have any worries or concerns. Any incidents of poor behaviour are meticulously recorded. Leaders cross-reference these weekly with any other concerns so that they can gain a full picture of an individual pupil's behaviour and respond quickly to any additional needs that arise.
- Pupils have participated in sessions to raise awareness about bullying and how to seek help if this ever occurs. They have created anti-bullying posters which are displayed around the school. Increased supervision has made pupils feel much safer going to the toilet facilities and at breaktimes. A recent bullying survey indicates that pupils feel much more secure in school and feel free from bullying.
- The proprietor has ensured that all the necessary arrangements in regard to behaviour and bullying are in place.

*Paragraphs 11, 12, 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- At the standard inspection in April 2024, many aspects of the school's welfare, health and safety provision were putting pupils at risk. Some parts of the site were unhygienic, untidy, and unsafe. The premises were in a poor state of repair. The school did not have a suitable health and safety policy that was effectively implemented, and the proprietor's risk assessment policy was too generic. Additionally, inspectors found that the proprietor had not acted on all of the recommendations of statutory bodies, such as the fire and rescue service and the local authority.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May 2024, it was judged that apart from the actions identified to remedy fire safety, leaders' plans to improve health and safety and risk assessment in school were not sufficient to meet these standards.
- The proprietor has now acted upon all of the recommendations from statutory bodies. For example, new fire doors have been installed throughout the school and the fire alarm system has been updated. Leaders make regular fire-safety checks of the building.

These are logged carefully, actions are identified and dated when remedied. All this information is stored in one place and is quick to access if needed. The school now complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

- Overall, there have been many improvements in health and safety in the school. The school has been thoroughly cleaned and repainted. The school is much tidier. The proprietor has a revised health and safety policy that is sufficiently detailed. It complies with all relevant laws. However, although health and safety checks are routinely completed, they lack rigour and precision. There is an increased level of accountability from the governance of the school in place. However, because of the quality of the checks made, it is not as robust as it could be.
- A revised and more detailed written risk assessment policy is in place. However, risk assessments remain generic, with a tendency to have one risk assessment to cover a wide range of areas. These do not sufficiently detail the appropriate actions to minimise risks to pupils.

#### *Paragraph 14*

- At the standard inspection in April 2024, inspectors found that, at times when pupils were unsupervised, there was sometimes behaviour that made them feel unsafe.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May 2024, it was judged that leaders' plans to improve supervision were not sufficient to meet these standards.
- Leaders have drawn up a suitable supervision procedure. It details that staff should be always supervising pupils. It includes a rota for staff deployment at break and lunchtimes and indicates the key areas that require supervision. For example, in the classrooms, at the school gate, out in the playground and at the toilet facilities. Leaders have also put in place a system of signing out and back in again if a pupil needs to go to the toilet facilities in lesson times. A member of staff always accompanies them. All pupils spoken to were aware of the increased supervision by staff and commented that school felt much safer because of these changes.

#### *Paragraph 15*

- At the standard inspection in April 2024, inspectors found that a minority of pupils were having lengthy periods of absence. The school did not take sufficient action to address these absences. Pupils' reasons for missing learning were often unchallenged. Furthermore, when pupils did not attend, the school's procedures for checking on these pupils' welfare and safety were lax.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May 2024, it was judged that leaders' plans to improve attendance were not sufficient to meet these standards.
- Leaders have made significant improvements in this area. They are fully aware and have acted upon the new attendance regulations. There are appropriate systems in place to register pupils' attendance and to allow them to monitor pupils' absences effectively. As a result, absence has substantially reduced. Leaders monitor attendance weekly and report on pupils' attendance on a regular basis through the governance arrangements at the school.
- The proprietor has published a suitable attendance policy for the school. Systems are in place to ensure that attendance will adhere to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024.

- Overall, the standards checked in this part remain unmet.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraph 25*

- At the standard inspection in April 2024, inspectors found several potential hazards within the premises, including unsafe electrical repairs. Some areas of the school premises were dirty and unhygienic. There were dilapidated buildings and unfinished construction work that had not been secured. The proprietor did not have effective systems for identifying and managing these risks.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May 2024, it was judged that leaders' plans to improve the premises were not sufficient to meet these standards.
- The proprietor has made many improvements to the premises since the previous inspection. For example, doorways are free from clutter, electrical wires have been removed and sockets have been made safe. Good quality fencing now separates areas outside that might pose risks to pupils. Generally, the school premises are fresher and less unsanitary. Areas that might pose a risk to pupils such as the kitchen and upstairs are either permanently boarded up or deemed out of bounds. However, there remain a few areas that need attention. The proprietor is still waiting to finalise the installation of a gate at the entrance to the school that ensures pupils' safety and security when they are in school. Similarly, curtains remain in the computer room while the proprietor waits for the arrival of replacement blinds.
- Health and safety checks are not as robust as they could be to ensure the school premises, accommodation and facilities are maintained to a standard that ensures the health, safety, and welfare of pupils.
- The standard checked in this part remains unmet.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- At the standard inspection in April 2024, inspectors found that the proprietor had failed to uphold its legal duties. It had not ensured that the school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils and promoting their well-being. Nor had it made sure that the school met all of the standards.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May and August 2024, it was judged that leaders' plans to improve leadership and management would not fully address the unmet standards.
- The proprietor and school leaders have shown determination to turn the school around following the April 2024 standard inspection. They have ensured that older pupils are offered the full breadth of curriculum. To this end, pupils now receive aesthetic and creative education, PSHE and RSE as well as careers guidance. The school has acted swiftly and decisively to remedy unmet standards related to safeguarding, and welfare, health, and safety, including around behaviour, bullying, supervision, and attendance.
- Leaders are in the process of setting up a thorough and regular cycle of quality assurance and checks on the quality of education, safeguarding and many elements of welfare, health, and safety. The proprietor is setting up systems to ensure that leaders at

all levels are regularly held accountable for their work, responsibilities, and the ongoing development of the school. This will include regular checks to ensure that the standards are met.

- However, there are still some standards that remain unmet. These relate to the quality of education, the school's premises and accommodation and the welfare, health, and safety of pupils. As such, the proprietor does not demonstrate that it has the knowledge or skills to meet the standards consistently. Also, it has not fulfilled its responsibilities to promote the well-being of pupils.
- The standard in this part remains unmet.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- At the previous inspection in April 2024, the school met the arrangements to fulfil duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. However, inspectors found that the accessibility plan did not reflect the state of the premises at the time.
- At this progress monitoring inspection, the inspector found that the plan, although in place, is generic. It is not precise enough to reflect the day-to-day and long-term issues that the school buildings present.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	133541
DfE registration number	889/6009
Inspection number	10357065

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	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Markazul Uloom
Chair	Muhammad Bilal Bawa
Headteacher	Sajid Bargit
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800
Telephone number	01254 660 026
Website	None
Email address	info@muloom.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	16 to 18 April 2024

## Information about this school

- Markazul Uloom is an Islamic faith school for boys. The school provides both a religious and secular education for its pupils.
- The school operates from two buildings situated at Park Lee Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 3NY. There are also several unoccupied buildings on the same site.
- At the same location, the proprietor also operates a school for girls, called Noorul Uloom. The girls' school is registered separately with the Department for Education (DfE).
- The school's previous standard inspection took place from 16 to 18 April 2024.



- The school is registered to admit up to 217 pupils aged from 11 to 19. At the time of the inspection, there were 39 pupils on the school roll. There were a small number of pupils in all year groups except the sixth form.
- The proprietor is a registered charity, Markazul Uloom. The chair of the proprietor body is one of the six trustees of the charity. The proprietor is not recorded on the DfE's 'Get Information about Schools.'
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in April 2024. It was conducted with no notice.
- The DfE required the school to prepare two action plans. The first requiring urgent action and the second following the publication of the standard report. These plans were statutory. Ofsted evaluated these plans on 13 May and 9 August 2024. At these times, the action plans were evaluated as not acceptable.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher who are also the designated safeguarding leads. She also met with teaching staff who are responsible for developing the curriculum.
- In the absence of the chair of the proprietor body, who was unavailable at the time of the inspection, the inspector met with two members of the proprietor body. She also spoke on the telephone to a representative of the Blackburn with Darwen local authority.
- The inspector spoke to a few teachers. She looked at curriculum plans, schemes of work and the curriculum policy.
- The inspector spoke to all the pupils that were in school that day.
- The inspector looked at a wide variety of documentation in relation to the standards checked.
- At the request of the DfE, the inspector also considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the single central register of pre-employment checks and whether the school's safeguarding policy is available to parents. These requirements of the standards are met.

## Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection*

#### **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 subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans, and schemes of work-
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
  - 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph 2(1)(a), the matters are-
    - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which-
      - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school's aim and ethos; and
      - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act[9];

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health, and safety of pupils**

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

#### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

#### **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; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

## Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's accessibility plan does not fully reflect statutory requirements.

### The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

#### Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2
  - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives all pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education;
  - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
    - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
    - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
    - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
  - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2).
  - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools.

#### Part 3. Welfare, health, and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school;
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
  - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
  - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.

- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

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