

Inspection of North Road Academy

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

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 November 2024

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 Requires improvement

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This school exemplifies its values through the actions of both pupils and staff. They foster a deep respect for one another and for the school environment. Pupils understand the school's high expectations of their behaviour, and the vast majority meet these standards. From the moment they join the Reception class, children learn the importance of listening carefully and following instructions.

The school provides a broad curriculum while also teaching pupils about their faith. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attend the school's 'Centre for Exceptional Children'. Here they receive effective support to aid their learning. In all classes, pupils enjoy their lessons. They are motivated to succeed and work diligently. Most pupils perform well in external tests and examinations.

Pupils are happy and attend school regularly. They engage in various activities that help them develop valuable personal skills. Some take pride in their positions as school monitors. They appreciate their role in maintaining the smooth operation of school life. Older pupils value the quality of the careers guidance they receive. This guidance motivates them to have ambitious future aspirations and provides them with clear steps to achieve their goals.

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

The proprietor has worked hard to address past weaknesses in the school's provision. This has included successfully working with staff, parents and carers to engage them in improvement priorities. The school has especially prioritised improving the quality of education it provides. Subject leaders now oversee specific subjects. These leaders have engaged in various training opportunities to enhance their expertise. This training has included them accessing guidance materials from professional associations. Additionally, the school has invited the support of an educational consultant. All this means that the school now has a clearer strategic vision. It has increased its capacity to ensure the quality of its curriculum.

The school has revised the design of its curriculum. This has included adopting commercial schemes of work in many subjects. Staff have identified the knowledge and vocabulary that they expect pupils to learn. They teach this content in a logical order so that pupils build their understanding over time.

Most of the time, adults implement the curriculum well. They explain new information clearly and regularly check pupils' understanding. This helps teachers identify any pupils who need extra help. The school also acts quickly to identify and respond to the needs of pupils with SEND. However, there is variation in the expertise of adults. Sometimes the tasks that they set are not well aligned with the curriculum's intended learning outcomes. In addition, teachers do not always recognise pupils' misconceptions or seize opportunities to deepen their understanding.

The school's approach to teaching early reading is proving successful and benefiting all pupils. Children begin learning phonics when they join the Reception Year. They build their knowledge each day and regularly practise their skills. Staff members quickly identify pupils who are falling behind and provide extra support to help them keep up. As a result, most pupils are becoming fluent and confident readers. Additionally, the school emphasises developing pupils' reading comprehension. This is helping to foster pupils' love of reading. Many show enthusiasm and a deep understanding of the texts they engage with.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times. They are kind and polite to one another and take pride in welcoming visitors to their school. Most are focused and eager to learn. They listen attentively and follow instructions. Staff recognise and praise pupils' effort. Pupils value this recognition and appreciate the range of rewards that they receive.

The school takes its responsibility to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain seriously. It promotes values that enhance pupils' social interactions and independence. This includes teaching relationships education. Children in the early years discuss their own families and enjoy learning about the families of others. Teachers encourage all pupils to express their opinions and thoughts. Older pupils take part in role-playing activities, debates and class discussions. Many enhance their learning by taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. This approach is working well. It is helping to broaden pupils' understanding of society and support their personal development.

The school's careers education program is proving to be effective in ensuring that pupils are well informed about their future options. They are eager to learn about pathways into further education, training and employment. In addition, older pupils benefit from arrangements made for them to participate in work experience placements.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- There is variation in staff's expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. At times, the tasks set by adults and the checks they make on pupils' understanding are not as effective as the school expects. This limits pupils' learning. The school should ensure that all staff members who work with pupils are teaching the curriculum effectively.

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	10342085
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Naeem Bashir and Imran Siddique
Headteacher	Naeem Bashir
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,000 to £4,300
Telephone number	01782 829 870
Website	www.northroadacademy.com
Email address	Naeem.bashir@northroadacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	28 February to 2 March 2023

Information about this school

- North Road Academy is an independent day school.
- The school has an Islamic ethos.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in March 2023 when the school was judged to be requires improvement.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is registered to admit 230 pupils on roll.
- The school provides education to some pupils with education, health and care plans. Part of this education is provided by staff with enhanced SEND training. The school refers to this element of its provision as 'The Centre for Exceptional Children'.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and representatives of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of sessions, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also made lesson visits and reviewed samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including school policies and the school's website.

- Inspectors made checks relating to the independent school standards, including checks on the school's premises.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View surveys.

The school's progress in meeting previously failed standards

During the inspection we checked whether the school now meets the independent school standards that it was judged to have failed at its previous emergency inspection on 20 February 2024.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school now meets the previously failed standards.**

Paragraph 7 to 7(b)

- At the time of the previous monitoring inspection, the school's safeguarding policy did not reflect all of the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It did not ensure that sufficient lines of accountability were in place to maintain robust oversight of safeguarding procedures. This was because the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL were the proprietors of the school. Safeguarding roles were not able to be discharged with sufficient independence.
- Since this time the school has restructured the roles and responsibilities of those who maintain oversight of the school's safeguarding duties. A new DSL and deputy DSL have been appointed. The school has assured that these members of staff have the necessary understanding and experience to fulfil their roles effectively. There are now sufficient lines of accountability in place to maintain robust oversight of safeguarding procedures.
- These standards are met.

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- At the time of the previous monitoring inspection, the proprietor had not ensured that the independent school standards were consistently met.
- Since this time, the proprietor has acted swiftly to address previous weaknesses. The school is able to demonstrate how improvements have been embedded so that the standards are met consistently.
- These standards are met.

Information about the progress monitoring inspection

- The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a progress monitoring inspection to take place at the same time as the standard inspection. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the requirements of the standards that were judged as unmet at the progress monitoring inspection that took place on 20 February 2024.
- This was the third progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in March 2023. After that inspection, the DfE required the school to complete three action plans. Each of these was evaluated by Ofsted and judged to be acceptable.

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Beech

His Majesty's Inspector

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