

Inspection of Rochdale Islamic Academy

Greenbank Rd, Rochdale OL12 0HZ

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 December 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

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?

Rochdale Islamic Academy is a warm and friendly school. Staff forge positive relationships with pupils. This helps the school to create a caring and respectful atmosphere. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They relish the strong friendships that they make. This helps pupils to feel a sense of belonging.

Most pupils behave well. They respond well to the high expectations that staff have for their conduct. Pupils display focused and positive attitudes to their learning. As such, most classrooms are calm and purposeful.

The school has high ambitions for pupils' academic success. However, the school's expectations for all pupils' achievement are not entirely realised. The school has not fully addressed the weaknesses in the design and delivery of the curriculum in some subjects. This limits how well some pupils progress through the curriculum and achieve in these subjects.

Pupils are encouraged to build their confidence through a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils enjoy taking up roles of responsibilities such as pupil mentors, reading leads and school councillors. This helps the school to establish a sense of community among pupils. Pupils relish opportunities to visit art galleries, theatres, museums and different places of worship. These opportunities expand pupils' knowledge of the wider world and better prepares them for life in modern society.

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

In recent times, the school has begun to strengthen its curriculum. However, on occasion, instability in staffing has limited the pace at which the school has addressed weaknesses in the curriculum in some subjects. That said, there is a clear rationale for the design of the curriculum in some subjects. In these subjects, the school has made it clear what essential knowledge should be taught and when this learning should take place. However, in other subjects, the curriculum is not equally as well-developed. For instance, in these subjects, the school has identified overarching themes that it wants pupils to learn but not the key knowledge within these themes.

In some subjects, teachers have strong subject knowledge. This helps them to develop pupils' understanding of the content in sufficient breadth and depth. However, the school has not ensured that this is the case in some other subjects. In these subjects, teachers are not as well-equipped to deliver the curriculum as it is intended. For example, at times, some staff lack the expertise and knowledge that is needed to design effective learning activities. This means that some pupils do not gain a deep enough understanding of the subject content. This limits how well they achieve in these subjects.

In some subjects, teachers do not effectively check that pupils have learned the intended curriculum. This hinders how quickly teachers address gaps in pupils' learning. This means that some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. Consequently, they struggle to make sense of subsequent subject content.

The school is at the early stages of developing its systems to identify the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). At times, this means that staff do not identify and support some pupils with SEND as well as they should. As such, some pupils with SEND do not achieve well.

Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. They appreciate the well-stocked library which gives them access to a broad range of texts. However, the school's processes to identify deficits in pupils' reading knowledge have not been fully developed. As a result, some pupils do not receive the timely support that they need to develop their fluency and accuracy in reading.

The school's ethos underpins its processes to develop a positive climate for learning. For instance, pupils are taught about fairness, justice and respect through strong behaviour management systems. Most pupils are respectful of the school routines. They display excellent manners and have a positive demeanour to learning. Attendance rates are high.

Through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum, pupils develop a strong understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils are taught about the full set of protected characteristics as stipulated in the Equality Act 2010. Through the PSHE curriculum, pupils are taught the statutory aspects of the relationship and sex education curriculum.

Older pupils benefit from a comprehensive careers programme. For example, Year 10 pupils have opportunities to explore a diverse range of careers through work experience. They encounter a wide scope of providers of apprenticeships and other post-16 qualifications. Consequently, pupils are adeptly prepared for their next stage in education, employment and/or training.

Most staff have a common and shared understanding of the school's ambition for pupils. Staff typically value the support that is provided by the school to manage their workload and well-being. As such, staff are motivated to improve their practices to help pupils to achieve well.

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school generally ensures that there are regular checks to maintain the health and safety of the school building.

The proprietor has not ensured that leaders have the required knowledge and expertise to ensure that the independent school standards ('the standards') are met consistently well. This is because the systems for monitoring the standards are not as effective as they should be. In addition, the proprietor has not resolved staffing and financial barriers quickly enough. While the school has begun to remedy these

matters in recent times, improvement has, at times, been slow. The current staffing changes and restructure provides assurances that there is now clear capacity for the school to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, the curriculum design is underdeveloped. As a result, some pupils do not build on their subject knowledge as well as they should. The school should ensure that in all subjects, key knowledge is identified and logically ordered so that pupils know and remember more over time.
- In some subjects, teachers do not have sufficient expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively. This means that some pupils do not gain the depth of understanding of the subject content that they should. The school should ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge that they need to design learning activities effectively to help pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers do not routinely check that pupils have secured their prior learning effectively. Sometimes, this means that teachers move onto new learning without addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge. This weakens how well some pupils progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers check what pupils understand so that misconceptions are quickly addressed before new learning is introduced.
- The school does not identify the specific aspects of reading that some pupils find more difficult. Consequently, pupils who struggle to read do not improve their reading knowledge as quickly as they should. The school should ensure that staff are equipped to diagnose the deficits in pupils' reading knowledge so that pupils can be better supported to read with fluency and confidence.
- The school does not identify pupils' additional needs well enough. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff receive the training that they need so that they can better recognise and meet the additional needs of pupils with SEND.
- The proprietor has not maintained sufficient oversight of the quality of the school's provision. Nor has it ensured that the standards are met consistently well. This has hindered how well weaknesses in the quality of education have been addressed. The proprietor should sharpen its monitoring systems so that it can ensure that the school's actions have a positive impact on the quality of education and that the standards are consistently met.

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School details

Unique reference number	147662
DfE registration number	354/6039
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10342158
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Proprietor	Muslim Education Association
Chair	Sohail Ahmed
Headteacher	Arif Pirbhai
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,600
Telephone number	017 0671 0184
Website	www.riag.org.uk
Email address	admin@riag.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 June to 1 July 2021

Information about this school

- The school operates from Greenbank Rd, Rochdale OL12 0HZ.
- This is an Islamic faith school.
- The school is registered to admit up to 200 pupils.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and will commence his role fully in January 2025.
- The most recent standard inspection of the school was on 29 June to 1 July 2021.
- 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, headteacher and senior leaders. They also held meetings with staff, including those responsible for attendance and pupils' behaviour, SEND, reading, welfare and personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including those relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also considered the curriculum across some other subject areas and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also met with leaders to review other areas of the curriculum.

- The lead inspector made a tour of the school premises to check the suitability of the premises and accommodation against the relevant standards.
- 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.
- There were very few responses to Ofsted's Parent View but inspectors considered the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Amina Modan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Phill Walmsley

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,
 - 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.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 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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