Inspection of Rochdale Islamic Academy

36 Taylor Street, Rochdale, Greater Manchester OL12 0HX

Inspection dates:	18 to 20 March 2025

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 thrive at this school. They represent their school with pride. Pupils exhibit the high level of respect and exceptional manners that are modelled by staff. Pupils consistently rise to and realise the high aspirations that the school has for their conduct and achievement. They extend a warm welcome to visitors at the school. Most pupils achieve well. Pupils are happy here.

Pupils enjoy taking on leadership roles at the school. As ambassadors, older pupils provide their peers with helpful guidance about how to keep themselves safe and healthy, fundamental British values and the importance of regular attendance. This helps pupils to become confident and resilient young people.

The school provides pupils with many opportunities to contribute to the community. Pupils raise money for local and national charities. They appreciate the time that they receive for reflection and meditation. This helps pupils to care for their mental health. Pupils enjoy a range of trips such as to museums and places of worship, which strengthens their understanding of the subjects that they study.

Pupils aspire to achieve great things in their futures. They gain valuable insights from a comprehensive careers education programme, which includes visits from school alumni and various local professionals.

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

The proprietor and the school have high aspirations for the achievement of all pupils. Together, they have established an environment where everyone is welcome and valued. It has a strong oversight of the independent school standards (the standards) to ensure that they are met consistently. The proprietor ensures that the school meets its statutory responsibilities under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The school provides pupils with an ambitious, well-designed and broad curriculum. It has thought carefully about the important knowledge that pupils should learn. Pupils are well supported to achieve a range of qualifications in recognition of their academic achievements. Most pupils are prepared well for each stage of their education. They make a successful transition to further education, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Typically, staff design activities that help pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding securely over time. On occasion, the activities that staff provide do not help pupils to build their depth of knowledge sufficiently well. This is because the school has not provided some staff with the support that they need. When this happens, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

In those subjects where staff have strong subject knowledge, the checks that they make on what pupils know and remember help pupils to address any

misunderstandings that they may have in their learning. At times, staff do not spot the gaps or misconceptions that pupils have in the subjects that they study. The school is at the early stages of providing some staff with the support that they need so that they can do this well. As a result, some pupils do not build on what they know and can do. When this happens, these pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), move on to new learning before they are ready.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Staff appreciate the information that the school provides about pupils' needs and how to meet them. This supports their workload. Staff use this information to provide these pupils with experiences that enable most of them to learn alongside their peers with success.

The school identifies the reading needs of pupils well. However, a small number of pupils do not get the help that they need to become fluent readers. This prevents these pupils from accessing some parts of the academic curriculum as well as they should. Pupils benefit from reading a range of secular texts, alongside books that support their Islamic Studies. These books help pupils to learn about the importance of showing respect for others, antisemitism, loneliness and poverty.

Pupils approach their learning with an extremely high level of motivation. They routinely demonstrate respect towards staff and their peers. Staff provide effective support to a small number of pupils that need help to improve their attendance. This has helped to increase the rate of attendance for these pupils.

The school's programme to promote pupil's personal development prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils receive advice from a nutritionist prior to Ramadan, which supports their well-being. They value the differences that may exist between people. Pupils know the features of a healthy relationship.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- At times, the school designs activities that do not help pupils to develop a secure knowledge of the subjects that they study. This prevents pupils, including some with SEND, from achieving as well as they should. The proprietor should ensure that it supports staff to design learning activities that prepare pupils well for each step in their education.
- The school does not routinely check what pupils have learned and remembered. As a result, some errors and misconceptions go unnoticed and persist over time. The proprietor should ensure that staff check pupils' understanding and address

any misconceptions, enabling them to build key knowledge and tackle more complex learning.

- Some pupils do not receive the support that they need to become fluent readers. When this happens, these pupils struggle to access some parts of the school's curriculum. The school should ensure that it provides these pupils with the help that they need to develop their reading fluency, so that they can learn the school's ambitious curriculum with success.

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	134575
DfE registration number	354/6006
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10342046
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	88
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Muslim Education Association
Chair	Sohail Ahmed
Headteacher	Arif Pirbhai
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,000
Telephone number	01706347344
Website	www.riab.org.uk
Email address	info@riab.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November to 2 December 2021

Information about this school

- Rochdale Islamic Academy is an Islamic school for boys. The school opened in August 2003.
- The school operates from a single address at 36 Taylor Street, Rochdale, Greater Manchester OL12 0HX.
- The school is registered to admit up to 290 pupils.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2024.
- 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders from the proprietor body, including the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics and geography. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the curriculum plans for a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, the curriculum, assessment, pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school premises.

- Inspectors viewed a range of documentation that was provided by the school, including those relating to the standards.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Pauline Rowland	Ofsted Inspector

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