

Manchester Muslim Preparatory School

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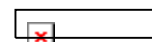
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Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

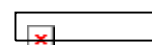
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School details

Introduction and summary

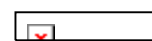


Purpose and scope of the inspection



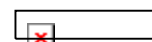
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



Manchester Muslim Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys and girls that opened in 1993. It has been run by a charitable trust since 1994. There are currently 186 pupils in the school, aged 3 to 11. The school is housed on three floors of a large Victorian house in a residential area of south Manchester. It aims to 'create a caring, warm atmosphere within which pupils can develop their full potential' and develop a love for God and 'confidence in their identity as young Muslims.' It has high expectations of its pupils 'not only in academic excellence but also in standards of behaviour, appearance and character.'

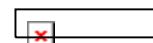
Summary of main findings



This is a good school that is successful in achieving its aims. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has a positive impact on pupils' work,

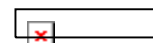
attitudes and behaviour. The secure spiritual environment in which pupils can learn and make good progress. The broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to develop a wide range of skills and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Teaching is mainly good, with some very good features. Subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles effectively and largely contribute to the academic success of the pupils. The welfare, health and safety of pupils are well promoted. Parents feel well informed of their children's progress and are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

What the school does well



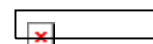
- it provides a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares its pupils well for the next stage of their education;
- teaching is mainly good or very good;
- it provides rigorous procedures for assessing the standard of pupils' work and monitoring their progress;
- it is successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in a way that empowers them to grow into responsible British citizens confident in their Islamic identity;
- it fosters very good relationships that enable the school community to work harmoniously together; and
- parents are highly supportive of the school.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



- inform parents and others that details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding year are available on request even if it is a nil return; and
- keep written records of all complaints, indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.

Next steps



Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- further develop the schemes of work for Islamic studies, Arabic, Urdu and French and set targets for pupils' learning and attainment year to year so that assessment in these subjects is consistent with assessment in other subjects;
- produce an overall educational development plan incorporating the co-ordinators' improvement plans and detailing priorities for the current academic year, in particular strategies and timescales to develop speaking and listening in all subjects for; and
- ensure that high achieving pupils are provided with consistently challenging activities in all subjects.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

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1. The quality of education provided by the school

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The quality of the curriculum

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The quality of curricular provision for the pupils' academic, physical and personal development is good. The school meets its stated aim in the parents' handbook to teach the full National Curriculum plus French, Urdu, Islamic studies and Arabic. The pupils have worthwhile aesthetic and creative experiences through art as well as nashid (Islamic song) singing and Qur'anic recitation.

The curriculum policy is clearly detailed and effectively informs parents and new staff of the school's intentions for its pupils. There are schemes of work for most subjects that are based on National Curriculum guidelines and some, for example, science, are supplemented by commercial programmes. Provision for Islamic studies, coupled with strong Qur'anic teaching, is good, although there are insufficient links with other subjects. The curricula for Arabic, French and Urdu are good and are taught effectively throughout the school. The current schemes of work for Islamic studies, Arabic, Urdu and French would support planning better if they were more detailed, for example with targets for pupils' learning and attainment year to year.

Teachers' long- and medium-term plans are good and provide a firm basis for their weekly and daily planning. Planning for literacy in each year group is thorough and closely matched to the National Literacy Strategy. Mathematics is taught mainly through a suitable commercial scheme. Information and communication technology (ICT) supports learning in other subjects such as English, mathematics, history, art and geography. Pupils in Year 5 in a mathematics lesson were observed using their ICT skills effectively to complete a data entry and search a data base. Provision for art is good and closely linked to the Islamic ethos of the school.

Curricular provision for the nursery and reception classes (Foundation Stage) is good. Both classes effectively follow national guidance for this age range when planning the curriculum. When pupils attain the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage, they start on the early stages of the National Curriculum. This enables them to make good progress.

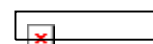
The school provides full-time supervised education for its pupils of compulsory school age. Its effective curriculum provision promotes the pupils' good progress in all of the required areas of learning. Provision for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory. Lesson planning invariably indicates how the pupils' needs will be met and work is generally well matched to the full range of ability. Teachers and assistants work hard to ensure that the lower attainers make sufficient progress in lessons and over time, but the higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged. Detailed individual learning programmes are provided when necessary, with help enlisted from parents to support the programme at home. The learning targets are not sufficiently specific and measurable to enable progress to be monitored closely and regularly.

Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. It is taught mainly

through Islamic studies and strong elements of PSHE permeate the whole ethos of the school.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of day visits to museums, galleries and science centres, from which all classes benefit. All visits extend the work undertaken in a range of subjects such as science, art, history and geography. Pupils have good recall of visits to the Air Raid shelters in Stockport and the Victorian Styal Mill, for example. An annual residential visit for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 to Ghyll Head in the Lake District promotes their confidence and social skills. Extra-curricular activities include karate after school and a Wild Life club at lunchtime. These are popular and well attended. During the summer term, the provision is extended to include drama, art and craft and a range of sports. During Ramadan, the school provides a Qur'an club.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The teaching is good, and often very good, with a minority of satisfactory lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils are able to make good progress and develop their skills in all subjects because their teachers use the thorough assessment procedures in place to plan work that matches their needs closely. The schemes of work for core subjects are detailed and support good quality short-term and medium-term plans. The assessment of pupils' work and the monitoring of their progress are strengths of the school. Pupils' performance is evaluated in relation to their prior attainment, as well as in comparison with similar schools and national expectations. The national test results of the last two years show that pupils achieve higher than the national average in all core subjects. However, higher attainers do not always achieve as well as they could.

The provision for pupils who have SEN is satisfactory because teachers draw up suitable individual education plans when necessary. Teachers plan suitable activities for lower achievers and classroom assistants generally support them well. The school makes effective use of classroom assistants by deploying them to support all ability groups. In some lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for higher achievers.

In very good lessons, teachers excel in teaching skills as well as subject content. They model very good quality language which pupils can emulate. They provide consistently challenging activities which stimulate pupils. They make imaginative use of resources. They provide sufficient time for pupils to think things through, assess their own work and other pupils' work and engage in problem-solving. Pupils work with a sense of urgency as teachers maintain a fast pace.

For example, in a very good geography lesson on the weather, Year 3 pupils were fully engaged and excited because their teacher aroused their interest through stimulating questioning, chose activity sheets that provided challenge for all and planned a complementary computer activity for pupils in pairs. The classroom assistant was suitably briefed to fulfil his support role. Pupils responded very well to the teacher's firm but kind class management and produced a good amount of work. They could use the geographical language modelled by their teacher accurately.

Where lessons are satisfactory rather than good, teachers' questions do not always extend pupils' thinking or assess their understanding. Teachers do not always brief classroom assistants sufficiently well about the learning objectives to enable them to support pupils successfully.

Most teachers have suitable teaching qualifications and specialist teachers have the knowledge required for the age range they teach. The school has a relevant staff training programme and focuses appropriately on developing the curriculum co-ordinators. They lead their curriculum areas effectively and have a good understanding of priorities for development. The specialist language teachers require further training in literacy and oracy skills particularly speaking and listening, to raise the standard of all pupils and target the needs of the vast majority of pupils who are learning

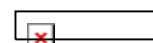
English as an additional language (EAL).

All staff provide very good role models and show respect and care for their pupils. This, combined with good class management, contributes effectively to fostering pupils' mature behaviour, strong self-esteem and confidence.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is an area of significant strength and the school's Islamic ethos ensures that the pupils' personal development is fostered well. Each of the four strands has a positive impact on pupils' work, attitudes and behaviour.

The pupils' spiritual development is good. Through Islamic and Qur'anic studies, opportunities for prayer, nashids, regular assemblies and class tutor times pupils build a respect for themselves and others. Pupils pray collectively, taking turns to lead the prayer, and recite du`as (supplications) together. The opening chapter of the Qur'an is recited in Arabic and translated into English in unison allowing time for reflection over its meanings. Older pupils listen very respectfully in a mature manner to younger pupils performing nashids.

Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and is a result of the very good role models their teachers represent. A strong culture of mutual respect exists between pupils and teachers. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and have very high standards of behaviour. Contributory factors to this are the 'catch them being good' philosophy the school has adopted as well as the many 'challenge' initiatives such as 'collect as many good deeds as you can' during Ramadan. New initiatives such as mediation are planned for next term.

Pupils are well adjusted, very confident and very happy at school. They show great respect and care for each other which results in the relaxed atmosphere that permeates the school. Pupils are friendly and courteous to all and are a pleasure to be with. They are delighted to discuss their work and are ready to express their opinions politely. Older pupils are granted prefect status and given responsibilities that are taken very seriously. Suitable opportunities are taken to discuss social and moral issues, especially in Islamic studies lessons that are combined with the PSHE curriculum. Other subjects also contribute to social and moral development. For example, in history lessons pupils have opportunities to explore moral values through the study of such historical issues as child labour in Victorian times. In geography, pupils explore the concept of khilafah (stewardship) through the study of sustainable development. Attractive and informative displays with strong moral messages are displayed throughout the school.

Pupils are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves through their collections for charities such as Children in Need and a local cancer hospital. During Ramadan pupils collect and deliver food parcels to elderly neighbours.

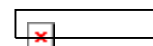
Pupils' cultural development is very good. The school manages to instil a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England through various visits to the school from the police, the fire service, a doctor and a dentist. In history, pupils gain an understanding of how Britain developed as a democratic system and are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and racism. They learn to appreciate how society is made of people from different cultures and start to develop tolerance and respect for others. This is strengthened further by the annual international food festival during which

pupils wear costumes from a culture other than their own. The Islamic Studies syllabus includes components on Christianity, Judaism and Ancient Egypt. This is supported with assemblies such as one on Hinduism which strongly promoted tolerance and harmony through understanding and respect.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school makes good provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety. All required policies are in place and are implemented. The staff know the pupils well and monitor their individual personal development sensitively and effectively. The school takes seriously its responsibility for the pupils' welfare.

Suitable procedures are in place for child protection and these have recently been updated to have regard to the latest guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The revised policy is to be presented to the trustees shortly. The headteacher has had appropriate training in child protection issues and plans are in place for other members of staff to have similar training. The anti-bullying and behaviour management policies are also in line with national recommendations. These are implemented effectively and promote the very good behaviour found throughout the school. Pupils report that bullying is not a problem at the school. Teachers keep on file written records of the rare instances of misdemeanours committed by pupils. The policy and procedures for out-of-school visits meet requirements. Procedures are thorough and are carefully managed by the designated co-ordinator.

The school pays appropriate attention to health and safety matters. Teachers undertake risk assessments using the local education authority's pro-forma and documentation. There are regular termly fire drills. Clear procedures for evacuation are displayed throughout the school and thorough checks of alarms and equipment are undertaken at regular intervals. Two minor requirements resulting from the Fire Officer's visit in October have been attended to. The fire risk assessment has been deemed satisfactory by the DfES.

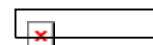
Most staff have First Aid qualifications. There is always a First Aider on the premises when pupils are present. The school keeps an appropriate record of all accidents and the treatment administered.

The nursery entrance to the school provides access for wheel chair users, although the split level site is difficult to negotiate for the less mobile. The school has drawn up plans of how it could make the curriculum and the site more accessible over the next three years within affordable means.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



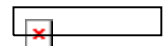
The school fully meets the requirements for checking the suitability of staff. It is owned by a charitable trust to whom the headteacher is responsible. All but one member of staff has been subject to satisfactory clearance by the Criminal Records Bureau. The school has applied for and awaits clearance for one classroom assistant. Volunteers also have appropriate checks made if they have contact with pupils. The school has detailed and thorough procedures for appointing new staff and all necessary pre-employment checks are carried out effectively. Appropriate records are kept.

Collectively, the teaching staff have a suitable range of subject knowledge. They form an effective team, ably supported by an efficient bursar.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school's premises and accommodation are suitable for their purpose. The school occupies three floors of a large Victorian house that offers adequate space for classrooms and communal rooms. The building is well maintained and is in good decorative order.

The distribution of the teaching areas has been sensibly thought out and the youngest pupils have their classrooms on the ground floor. The furniture and fittings in the classrooms and library are suitable and appropriate for the size of the pupils. The school uses its specialist rooms effectively. The library has a computerised borrowing system and is used weekly by pupils of all ages. In principle, all classes from Year 1 to Year 6 use the new ICT suite weekly. However, since there are only 15 computers, some lessons may be planned on a fortnightly cycle. The Urdu room doubles as a resource room and the spacious staff room is also used as a resource and meeting room. The hall is used for physical education, prayers and assemblies. The dining room is situated in the basement and is not large enough to accommodate the whole school, so there are two separate sittings for infants and juniors.

Toilet facilities are good and there are sufficient separate facilities for staff. There is one dedicated wudu (ritual ablution) area which is used sensibly to avoid congestion before prayer times.

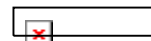
Corridor and classroom wall space is used very effectively to display pupils' work and posters reflecting the school's ethos.

There are two suitable outdoor playgrounds that are fenced off from the main road and provide separate safe play for younger and older pupils at break times. The school has made creative use of a narrow strip of land skirting the building by designing it as a garden with borders of flowers and bushes and a very small pond. This area is well used by pupils for direct observations and basic gardening skills.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The quality of information for parents and other partners is good. The parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with a wide range of information about the school. Newsletters are published termly and contain details about school events and pupils' achievements. The trustees' report provides financial information as well as details about secondary school places secured by pupils when they leave. The school handbook provides clear details of school procedures and the curriculum. However, parents are not provided with details of the number of complaints the school has registered under the formal procedure during the preceding year.

There are good opportunities for parents to meet staff informally at the beginning and end of each day to discuss their children's progress and exchange information informally as well as consultation meetings when more detailed discussions can be entered into. The annual written report gives good information about pupils' attainment and progress. Parents are encouraged to visit the school to share their views and concerns.

A very high proportion of parents responded to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection. Their views expressed much satisfaction with the school. They felt well informed, their children liked the school, had been helped to settle in quickly, behaved well, made good progress and were taught well.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

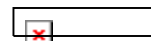
The school meets all the requirements except one.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- make it clear to parents and others that details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year are available on request, even if it is a nil return (paragraph 6(2)(j)).

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



There is a very clearly written complaints procedure which meets all but one of the requirements. It provides for the prompt handling of initial complaints and outlines helpfully any further steps that need to be taken. Timescales for dealing with complaints are included and provision is also made for setting up a hearing before an appropriately constituted panel. The school does not receive many complaints from parents. However, not all complaints are formally recorded. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt comfortable about approaching the school with an enquiry, a problem or a suggestion.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all the requirements except one.

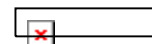
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school

should:

- ensure that written records are kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j)).

School details



Name of school:	Manchester Muslim Preparatory School
DfES ref number:	352/6041
Type of school:	Muslim Day School
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 83, Girls 103, Total 186
Annual fees (day pupils):	Main school: £2, 856, £2, 427.60 (1st sibling), £2, 142 (2nd sibling) Nursery £3, 190, £2, 711.50 (1st sibling), £2, 392.50 (2nd sibling)
Address of school:	551 Wilmslow Road Withington Manchester Lancashire M20 4BA
E-mail address:	muslimprepschool@aol.com
Telephone number:	0161 445 5452
Fax number:	0161 445 2283
Headteacher:	Mrs T Amin
Proprietor:	Manchester Islamic Schools Trust
Lead Inspector:	Mrs M Messaoudi
Dates of inspection:	22 - 25 November 2004