

# Manchester Islamic High School For Girls

## CONTENTS

---

### [Introduction and summary](#)

[Purpose and scope of the inspection](#)

[Information about the school](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[What the school does well](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations](#)

[Next steps](#)

### [Compliance with the regulations for registration](#)

[1. The quality of education provided by the school](#)

[The quality of the curriculum](#)

[The quality of the teaching and assessment](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[6. The quality of information for parents and other partners](#)

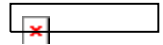
[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints](#)

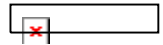
[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[School details](#)

## Introduction and summary

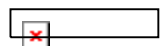


## Purpose and scope of the inspection



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.

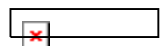
## Information about the school



Manchester Islamic High School for Girls is situated in the Chorlton area of Manchester. It is an independent Muslim day school for girls established in 1991 with an initial intake of fourteen girls. It is run by The Manchester Islamic Educational Trust that has also set up two other Islamic schools, Manchester Muslim Prep School, which is the main feeder school, and Kassim Darwish Grammar School for Boys. It is a member of The Association of Muslim Schools (AMS). It serves a multi-cultural community and now has 232 pupils aged 11 to 16 years.

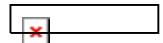
The school aims to *'create a warm Islamic environment within which pupils can develop to their full potential...help pupils to develop a love for Allah and confidence in their identity as young Muslim women...equip pupils to face the challenges of today's world by encouraging communication, personal growth and confidence at all levels'*.

## Summary of main findings



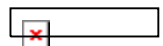
Manchester Islamic High School for Girls is a good school. It provides a secure and caring spiritual environment in which pupils can strengthen their Islamic identity. It is a happy, industrious community based on mutual respect, where teachers are very good role models who empower pupils to learn and make good progress. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects strongly the Islamic ethos of the school. Teaching is good and teachers have very effective procedures in place to assess pupils' standards and monitor their progress. The promotion of pupils' welfare is very good. Parents give overwhelming support to the school. The school is well managed by the acting headteacher and heads of department.

### What the school does well



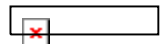
- it is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in a way that broadens their experience as confident and responsible Muslim British citizens;
- it provides a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education;
- it enhances its Islamic ethos through worthwhile curriculum innovations and adaptations;
- it provides good quality teaching and very effective procedures for assessing the standard of pupils' work and monitoring their progress. As a consequence, pupils achieve well;
- it fosters very good working relationships, a positive and mature attitude to learning and promotes excellent behaviour; and
- it promotes the pupils' welfare very effectively.

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



- make the playground safe and remove the hazards, as recorded in section 5 of this report.

### Next steps

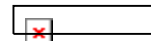


Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

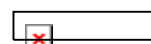
- develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum;
- review its whole school approach to developing literacy across the curriculum;
- broaden its approach to design and technology (DT);
- structure the Qur'anic Arabic curriculum and sharpen the focus of *tafsir* (explanation of Qur'anic verses); and
- develop the roles of the recently appointed coordinators of literacy, numeracy,

English as an additional language (EAL) and special educational needs (SEN).

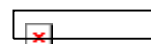
## Compliance with the regulations for registration



### 1. The quality of education provided by the school



#### The quality of the curriculum



The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. However, the breadth of curricular provision for the pupils' technological development is only just satisfactory, owing to the time allocated to DT - it is taught weekly in Years 7 and 8 only - and the lack of space and resources. The school follows the National Curriculum, to which it adds Islamic and Qur'anic studies. Music is not taught as a subject. However, the pupils have other worthwhile aesthetic and creative experiences through art and design and nashid (Islamic song) singing, as well as through tajweed (Qur'anic recitation). Their linguistic experience is enriched with the opportunity to study Arabic, Qur'anic Arabic, French and Urdu. Pupils can take their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Arabic and Urdu from Year 9. In Key Stage 4, their experience in the social area of learning includes business and communication studies. The school meets its stated aim in the prospectus to help pupils develop confidence in their Islamic identity and to equip them to face the challenges of today's changing world. It offers a minimum of nine subjects at GCSE level, including double award science. In addition to English, mathematics, science, Islamic studies and business and communication studies, pupils choose three options from Arabic, Qur'anic Arabic, French, Urdu, geography, history and art and design. From September 2005, they will also be able to study economics as an option.

The 2004 GCSE results show that 93% of pupils have attained grades A\*-C in at least five subjects, which is well above the national average for girls in non-selective schools. GCSE results have been consistently high in the last four years. The school was placed in the top 5% nationally for value added in 2004.

The school has a clear curriculum policy enhanced by departmental policies and supported by a comprehensive assessment policy. It monitors its development through coherent strategic planning. The curriculum is well managed; however, heads of department are not given sufficient time to fulfil their roles fully. The school has adapted suitable commercial schemes of work for most National Curriculum subjects, as well as for Urdu, Arabic and Islamic studies. Some good examples were seen in lessons of links with the Islamic ethos of the school. For instance, in science, pupils researched how the 13th century Muslim scientist Ibn al-Nafis had discovered pulmonary circulation 300 years before it was re-discovered in Europe. In English, pupils' religious values were used as a resource to enrich and extend their reading of texts such as *The Merchant of Venice*. However, these links vary in quality and frequency across the school. Links to citizenship are made in all subjects. The schemes of work for DT lack detail and do not show progression of skills and knowledge from year to year. Teachers' long- and medium-term plans are otherwise sufficiently detailed to provide a firm basis for their daily planning.

Provision for all subjects is good, except in DT, which was introduced this year, and in the use of ICT across the curriculum. The school has just started to plan the development of literacy and

numeracy across the curriculum in a more structured way, including a useful range of cross-curricular links. However, its approach to raising the standard of literacy across the curriculum needs reviewing. Provision for ICT as a subject is good but the use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped owing to a lack of resources and space. In Key Stage 3, the school follows an Islamic studies curriculum that has been devised by three member schools of the AMS and includes a system for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding. In Key Stage 4, it follows the GCSE religious studies/Islam option syllabus and pupils achieve at least well in this subject. Qur'an lessons focus on recitation skills and memorisation in Key Stage 3; as a result, pupils' reading skills are well developed. Tafsir is given a more prominent place from Year 10 in Qur'an and Qur'anic Arabic lessons but this aspect of pupils' learning lacks structure and focus.

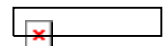
The curriculum is modified appropriately for pupils of all abilities. The match of work to pupils' needs is good because schemes of work indicate how the pupils' needs will be met and pupils are set into two or three groups for core subjects and Arabic at both key stages. The needs of the one pupil with SEN are appropriately met. The newly appointed SEN coordinator has not had time to develop her role. The two pupils learning EAL need specific support and their needs are adequately met. However, the procedures are only just robust enough to assess and monitor the needs of pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition. The school is beginning to develop its provision for gifted and talented pupils.

Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. It is taught within the Islamic framework and also through a discrete weekly lesson, science, Islamic studies, Qur'an lessons and assemblies. Pupils attend sessions on the dangers of smoking, drug awareness, healthy relationships and sex education. They also discuss a number of citizenship topics including the political and judicial systems, and ethical issues. The school is exploring ways to extend the study of citizenship within the school day.

The school prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education and the vast majority of school leavers remain in full-time education. Careers guidance is provided by the school through PSHE lessons and by the local Connexions Adviser, who provides a well-structured programme from Year 9. The school has planned two weeks' work experience in the community for pupils in Years 10. Preparation for adult life is further enhanced by the contributions of a wide range of visitors who talk about their professions and available career options.

The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities to enhance the curriculum, including a successful Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) visit to Saudi Arabia, study circles, visits to the theatre and museums, a science club and a drama club, science week, reading week and poetry week.

## **The quality of the teaching and assessment**



The quality of teaching is good. Over four-fifths of teaching is good, and of this, one third is very good. No teaching is unsatisfactory.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good; lessons are well prepared and good lesson plans provide structure. Pupils are aware of the aims of the lesson and review what they have learnt at the end of the session. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace. Homework is set regularly, and often requires independent research to extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Relationships between teacher and pupils are very good. Judicious use of praise and humour provides a supportive classroom ethos.

In very good lessons, teaching is energetic and the enthusiasm for the subject succeeds in maintaining the interest and involvement of pupils. Planning is precise, with effective use of assessment to match the work to pupils' abilities. For instance, in English, Year 9 pupils traced the breakdown of rules in *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. The teaching consistently challenged and stimulated them to draw on previous knowledge of the story to analyse the author's techniques. A

sensitively managed discussion followed with links made to religious commandments. Pupils made good progress.

Teachers have high expectations and set challenging tasks. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, GCSE level coursework was set. Not only did pupils rise to the challenge of the examination criteria, they also had to extend their knowledge and skill by constructing their own database. Effective teaching engages pupils in intellectual effort and use of a range of skills. In well-designed tasks in a Year 8 French lesson, all pupils made good progress in their listening, reading and speaking skills through increasing challenge in the use of French. This achievement continues into Key Stage 4, for example, in the very good progress made by less able pupils in their GCSE French coursework.

In the few satisfactory lessons, teaching is well planned, with appropriate tasks set. However, there are some weaknesses. For example, the pace of learning is not always brisk and not all the pupils are engaged in question and answer activities. Occasionally, the exposition by the teacher does not consistently model the best quality of language.

Pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. They respond positively to the variety of teaching methods used in many lessons, such as paired or group work and those that allow pupils to articulate and explore ideas. They collaborate eagerly with each other, offering constructive critiques of each other's work. In addition, they respond well to opportunities to evaluate their own knowledge in order to monitor their progress, highlighting strengths and weaknesses.

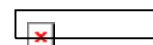
The school undertakes effective and well-documented assessment of pupils' progress. Teachers keep careful records of various kinds, for example, end of unit tests, half-yearly and end-of-year examinations, classwork and homework marking, and use this information effectively when planning lessons. Marking is conscientious, but does not always inform pupils sufficiently of how they can improve their work. Subject staff record progress over time effectively using a tracking system showing National Curriculum levels. The school's entrance examination determines the setting arrangements. Although available, not all subjects take account of pupils' Key Stage 2 standardised test results as part of baseline assessment.

The school has adequate resources in the majority of subjects, and teachers use them thoughtfully to support pupils' learning. For example, simple artefacts used effectively in an Arabic lesson brought the language alive for Year 7 pupils. A fishing rod, bucket and spade captured pupils' imagination, helping them to make good progress in moving from word to sentence level work on the topic of the seaside. However, resources for DT are minimal, and limit pupils' opportunities in designing and making. Provision for the subject of ICT is good. Pupils use a satisfactory range of materials in art and design and achieve high standards.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

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



The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. It is clearly reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and very good working and social relationships. Pupils are calm, courteous, respectful, helpful and very mature in their attitude and behaviour.

The school enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through planned curriculum opportunities, teaching strategies and pastoral care. Their Islamic identity is strengthened through the Islamic studies curriculum, and the links regularly made to Islam by most staff. Pupils deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings by studying Qur'anic Arabic and the

school provides several approaches to Qur'anic reading. Their spiritual development is nurtured through daily Islamic routines in addition to well-established activities including monthly qiyaams (spiritual and social evenings) for mothers and daughters, Islamic camps and community iftars (meal ending the fasting day) organised by the school's Islamic Society. Following the successful Umrah visit in October 2004, the school intends to take pupils to Mecca every two years. Teachers provide many opportunities for oral work which develop pupils' communication skills. These are reinforced through extensive communication units in PSHE. Pupils regularly make presentations, carry out interviews and experience role play. They are frequently encouraged to evaluate their work and that of their peers, which has developed in them constructive critical skills and a culture of improving work. Pupils' work is attractively displayed in classrooms and corridors, which boosts their self-esteem. They have contributed to the Islam Awareness Week in Manchester by exhibiting their art work. They have entered and won a European science competition.

Moral education is taught through subjects, citizenship and pastoral care. In Islamic studies, Year 9 pupils discussed the importance of laws in society and made links to citizenship. In English, Year 10 pupils discussed moral values, prejudice and racism in a lesson on 'Jews in Shakespeare's time'. The behaviour policy encourages pupils to have respect for others, the learning environment, the school's and others' property.

The school gives pupils numerous opportunities to show initiative. This starts with an emphasis on independent work in all lessons. Pupils have formed a dynamic school council and Islamic society, involved in organising school events, community activities, links with local schools and bringing their peers' concerns to the attention of the school management. However, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils feel that the school does not listen and respond to their views. Pupils have raised funds for a number of charities. They publish a newsletter, The Voice, in which they take the initiative to enhance Islamic teachings through various approaches. As they move up the school, they aspire to the leadership roles of prefects, head girl and deputy head girl. They are taught to lead the prayers that fall within the school day from Year 10.

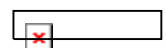
Pupils gain knowledge of public institutions and services in Britain through the citizenship programme. Their understanding of the political and judicial systems and the National Health Service is enhanced by visits from relevant professionals and visits to the law courts and Parliament. Pupils experience democracy by running elections for the school council and mock local or general elections. They have links with the Manchester Education Business Partnership and receive awards in recognition of their achievements, including those for attendance, punctuality and citizenship.

The school's provision for cultural education and preparation for life in a multi-cultural society is very good. The school's effort to embed citizenship in the curriculum contributes to this very successfully. The Islamic studies curriculum includes the study of several aspects of the world's main religions. For instance, when discussing what it means to live in a multi-cultural society, Year 10 pupils showed a sensitive appreciation of what each faith group, agnostics and atheists believe in terms of equality and respect for others. In physical education (PE), they have the opportunity to play friendly games against local schools. In art and design, humanities and languages, as well as through their interactions with a multi-cultural staff, they experience other cultures and compare similarities and differences in an understanding and respectful way.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**



The school promotes the pupils' welfare very effectively. However, provision for pupils' health and

safety is only just satisfactory. Comprehensive policies support pupils' welfare, health and safety, and they fully meet the regulations. Staff know the pupils well and their welfare is taken seriously. The pastoral support arrangements are very good and form tutors play a key role in supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils are confident in approaching members of staff for help and advice. All teachers have undergone child protection training and six have recently obtained a First Aid qualification. Awareness of health and safety is increasing; accidents are monitored and the co-ordinator is receiving training.

A fire risk assessment has been undertaken and fire drills are held regularly. Pupils know the procedures for First Aid and fire safety, and comment that should any bullying occur the anti-bullying strategy is effective. The procedure for educational visits meets the requirements and girls benefit from trips to places such as the science museum and a residential outdoor pursuits centre.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The behaviour policy is an expression of the Islamic foundation of the school, reflecting values of respect and consideration for others. Pupils prize the rewards, such as merits for good work and letters of commendation sent to parents. Careful records are kept of sanctions, and individual occurrences monitored.

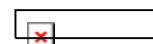
The admission register and attendance registers meet regulations. Attendance is monitored carefully and any absence is followed up methodically each morning by office staff, and tutors are kept informed.

The trustees are aware of the requirements to improve access for pupils with disabilities and have already started the programme to fulfil their responsibilities.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

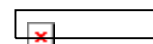


The school has appropriate procedures for checking the suitability of staff prior to their appointment. Identity and medical fitness are confirmed. Qualifications are checked and references confirming employment history and suitability for the post are obtained in writing. Checks have been made by the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children. All staff hold university degrees or higher qualifications and are suitably qualified in the subject they teach.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**



The school accommodation is satisfactory, although it has some limitations. The building is a large, converted Victorian house, with the addition of a single-storey extension. Recent refurbishment has added a third laboratory and improved the library into a pleasant work environment. The new side entrance, providing disabled access, is attractive with paving and flowerbeds.



Daily maintenance is generally efficient, although a few areas of carpet, whilst not a hazard, are worn and require repair or renewal. The school is used by another organisation on two evenings a week and on Sundays. While not affecting the school day, this has resulted on occasion in some damage to fabric, resources and pupils' work. Specialist facilities for science and ICT support pupils' learning. PE facilities are limited and, following some alterations, the changing room is too small to be used. Classrooms are satisfactory and attractive displays give them a subject identity and enliven the learning environment. However, several rooms are small for the size of some teaching groups, and storage is at a premium, for example in the art room, which is also used for DT. The absence of a specialist area for DT, coupled with limited resources, restricts pupils' learning in designing and making. Toilet and wudu facilities are sufficient in number, and are clean and hygienic. The sick room is adequate for its purpose, but is unattractive and requires some refurbishment.

Action on a list of points raised by the fire officer is almost complete, with further work planned during the summer holidays.

The hall is used frequently for assemblies, dining, examinations and for PE lessons. The new floor is an improvement but the hall is restricted in size and height for some aspects of PE. The condition of the outside play space is unsatisfactory and restricts its full use during lessons. Staff and pupils are mindful of safety; however, the playground is unsafe. The surface has loose gravel in places and is uneven, as are areas of the surrounding paving. A number of health and safety hazards related to the playground were drawn to the attention of the school for its urgent action.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

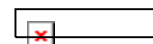
The school meets all but one of the requirements.

***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:

- refurbish the outside play space in order for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

**6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**



The school places great importance on maintaining good links with parents, as stated in its mission statement. A large majority of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and were overwhelmingly positive about the school. However, not all parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems.

Effective strategies are in place to ensure that parents and pupils are well informed about school matters. An informative prospectus gives parents a clear picture of the school's aims and its curriculum and procedures. This is supplemented by a parents' handbook and an option booklet for parents of pupils in Year 9. Year 7 pupils spend a day at the school before they join in order to learn about its procedures, practices and expectations. This enables them to settle quickly and easily. However, not all pupils feel that they were helped to settle well when they started at the school.

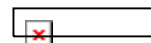
Half-termly interim reports give parents a summary of their children's progress. Two full annual reports give detailed information about their children's attainment and progress in every subject, as well as an overview of their personal development. Parents' evenings are held twice a year and all parents are expected to attend. A third meeting is arranged for the parents of targeted pupils so as to strengthen the school/parents partnership through the drawing-up of an action plan for each pupil

concerned. Parents can discuss their children's progress with individual subject teachers at any time. Almost all the parents who responded to the questionnaire feel they are well informed about their children's progress.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

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

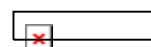


The complaints policy meets in full the requirements of the regulations. It is available to parents and prospective parents, and sets out clear time scales and procedures which the school will follow in the management of a complaint. A small minority of parents say they do not understand the complaints procedure.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**School details**



---

Name of school:	Manchester Islamic High School For Girls		
DfES ref number:	352/6040		
Type of school:	Muslim		
Status:	Independent		
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16 years		
Gender of pupils:	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 0,	Girls 232,	Total 232
Annual fees (day pupils):	£3,220		
Address of school:	55 High Lane Chorlton Manchester Lancashire M21 9FA		
E-mail address:	mihsg_ad@hotmail.com		
Telephone number:	0161 881 2127		
Fax number:	0161 861 0534		
Headteacher:	Mrs Aminata Sessay		
Proprietor:	Manchester Islamic Education Trust		
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi		
Dates of inspection:	4 - 7 July 2005		