

Manchester Muslim Preparatory School

551 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester, M20 4BA

Inspection dates

13–15 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Good leadership and management ensure the curriculum provides pupils with a good range of opportunities for learning. Faith and academic studies are woven together seamlessly so that pupils across the school make consistently good progress including in English and mathematics.
- Teaching across the school is good. Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding effectively in a broad range of Islamic and secular subjects. Many pupils reach high standards by the time they leave the school.
- The personal development of pupils is outstanding because an ethos based on respect and tolerance is central to all the school does.
- The school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and, coupled with their strong outcomes, results in pupils being prepared well for their life in modern Britain.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Pupils are confident and self-assured. They behave impeccably around the school and when on educational visits. The school's work to ensure pupils are able to integrate successfully into the wider community is commendable.
- The school's systems to ensure pupils remain safe in school are strong. Pupils are given appropriate guidance on how to keep themselves safe.
- The provision for children in the early years is good overall. Children make good progress from their starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is consistently of the highest quality. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to challenge pupils, of all abilities and ages, to deepen their learning further. Therefore, too few pupils make outstanding progress.
- Leaders' assessment information is not used well enough to evaluate precisely the impact of their actions on pupils' learning.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is not always as good as it could be because opportunities for them to use their skills to support their own learning are not provided frequently enough.
- On some occasions, adults in the early years provision do not take opportunities to boost children's basic literacy and numeracy skills even further.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding so that standards rise still higher and pupils make outstanding progress overall by:
 - ensuring teachers make even better use of their accurate assessment of pupils' learning to plan teaching which motivates and challenges all pupils more frequently
 - ensuring the high-quality feedback, given by many teachers to their pupils, is applied consistently well across the school in line with the school's marking policy
 - making even better use of pupils' positive attitudes to learning by providing more opportunities for them to investigate, explore and test for themselves
 - ensuring that children in the early years provision experience numbers, letters, words and phrases at every opportunity, including when they play outside.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring leaders at all levels, including trustees, are precise in their evaluation of the impact of their actions to raise achievement
 - ensuring leaders, teachers and, as a consequence, pupils and children benefit from the sharing of outstanding practice with other effective schools
 - reviewing the early years provision so that children gain even more benefit from the good-quality resources which are already available both in the classroom and in the outdoor play areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils' good progress is a direct result of the high expectations of the headteacher and other leaders. The headteacher models high standards in everything she does so that from the moment they arrive pupils are immersed in a culture of cooperation, respect and tolerance. Pupils are happy in school; they grow in confidence and quickly become effective learners ready and eager to do their best.
- The well-planned curriculum is successful in its use of Islam as the bedrock for strong academic achievement. A wide range of subjects, including Arabic, computing, Islamic studies, and design technology, are combined effectively with well-chosen extra-curricular activities, such as a visit from 'Wilder the Viking' and a visit to a local football club in preparation for enterprise week. As a consequence, pupils' motivation to learn is high and outcomes are good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen by leaders as the cement between faith and academic success. Evidence around the school shows that pupils learn about British institutions, such as the Royal Family and the parliamentary system, while maintaining their community links close to home, for example by providing baskets of fruit to local residents. Pupils talk accurately about democracy because they have been involved in campaigns to elect the school council and an 'Eco-warriors' committee. Leaders' promotion of fundamental British values is strong.
- Parents spoken with agree that the leadership and management of the school are strong. These parents quite rightly identified that pupils are encouraged to be outward-looking. They also agreed that pupils at the school are confident in their own identity and are respectful and understanding of people of different cultures. Parents who spoke with the inspector were highly supportive of the school. Their views were corroborated by the large majority of parents who gave their opinions through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The headteacher and trustees have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school. The headteacher has used her assessment of the school's performance to formulate an appropriate action plan to promote her vision for the school. Clear priorities have been set for further improvements in teaching as a means of raising standards to the highest levels. However, targets set to measure the success of leaders' actions are not always sharply focused on improvements in learning.
- Leaders have also put in place clear systems to track and monitor the attainment of pupils across the school. However, their analysis of the information gathered about pupils' performance is not always sharp enough to identify differences in rates of progress between groups of pupils. As a result, opportunities to refine some aspects of teaching, in order to boost learning, are missed occasionally.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a suitable system in place by which they can monitor and evaluate teachers' performance. Teachers' continuing professional development is aligned well to the school's priorities for improvement, including keeping children safe. For example, staff are suitably trained in the safeguarding of pupils and all adults have received training in how to identify and respond to signs of pupils being exposed to extremism.
- Systems to keep parents and other professionals, such as the local authorities which support children with education, health and care plans, informed about pupils' progress are strong. Frequent contact between school and the parents, such as interim and annual progress reports along with 'Update', the school brochure summarising the array of extra-curricular activities pupils have had the opportunity to be involved in, is valued highly by parents.
- Leadership of the early years is good overall. Leaders' excellent organisation of group activities is effective in overcoming some of the hurdles of having an outdoor space which is not directly connected to the Nursery and Reception classrooms. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop children's early reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Trustees meet frequently to receive reports about the school's progress. Link trustees visit the school often and gather first-hand information about the workings of the school, the quality of pupils' education and their safety. The trustees employ an external consultant to ensure they have an independent view of how well the school is performing. Trustees have an accurate view of the school's progress.
 - Trustees draw effectively on the information they have about the school in order to hold the headteacher to account about the strategic development of the school. However, trustees' knowledge

and understanding of the extent of pupils' progress is not sufficiently detailed to enable them to ensure the headteacher is successful in her drive for outstanding teaching and outcomes.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The pupils spoken with feel safe in school because 'the school grounds are secure' and they feel there is always someone they can speak to if they have a problem. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers generally plan lessons effectively so that pupils make good progress. Lessons are usually well matched to the needs of pupils so that learning flows smoothly. Inspectors' observations of learning, along with their scrutiny of pupils' work, demonstrate that, on the whole, pupils are engaged in their learning, including in writing, reading and mathematics. For example, in an English lesson, Year 6 pupils were observed writing enthusiastically and at length, following working in groups in previous lessons to gather ideas and formulate their plans for a story.
- Pupils thrive and grow in confidence because the strong relationships between adults and pupils create an atmosphere of trust and respect. Pupils of all ages were observed contributing effectively to their own learning because they had the confidence to answer questions and give their suggestions to the whole class. Readers listened to by inspectors read fluently and had the skills and confidence to correct their own mistakes with difficult words.
- Teachers assess pupils' achievement frequently. Leaders' analysis of teachers' assessments shows that the attainment of almost all pupils is at least in line with their peers nationally. However, on some occasions teachers do not assess pupils' rate of progress sharply enough and, therefore, opportunities to challenge pupils to deepen their learning are sometimes missed. For example, in a science lesson, pupils carried out a teacher-organised experiment to test the properties of rock, rather than designing their own tests. On this occasion, progress was no better than expected because pupils were not challenged sufficiently to extend and deepen their learning.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge is used confidently to maintain the interest and curiosity of pupils during most lessons. For example, in an Arabic lesson, the teacher used a range of strategies, such as singing, team games and short exercises, to ensure Year 1 pupils embedded their grasp of the Arabic alphabet. In another lesson, the teacher's skilful questioning was used successfully to guide Year 2 pupils to recap and embed their learning about the story of Guy Fawkes.
- In the main, teachers' expectations are high. Teachers set homework, mark pupils' work and give feedback frequently. However, there are pockets of inconsistency, especially in the quality and frequency of feedback provided by teachers. Where feedback is used well, for example in Years 4 and 6 English books, pupils edit, redraft and improve their work following the guidance given by the teacher. On occasions feedback is not focused sharply on how pupils can improve their learning and, therefore, does not always contribute effectively to securing consistently good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils develop into well-rounded young people who are considerate of the needs of others. Pupils' personal development is an embodiment of the school's ethos of using the Islamic faith to prepare pupils 'to face the challenges of today's changing world'.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Pupils grow in confidence from the minute they start at the school. Even the youngest children, in school for just a few weeks, have gained the confidence and trust to speak to visitors. Children in the Nursery class were quick to explain to inspectors how high they had bounced on the bouncy castle and what they could make out of building blocks in the classroom.
- Pupils take on a range of responsibilities which further develop their aspirations and self-confidence. Examples include pupils acting as prefects and taking up roles on the school council or as part of the 'Eco-warriors' committee.
- Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development abound throughout pupils' time at the school. Pupils participate in religious education and personal, social and health education lessons,

along with a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, such as educational visits to Knowsley Safari Park. Leaders are successful in actively promoting the fundamental British values of tolerance, respect and the rule of law, not least through the use of theme days. For example, a public services day included visits to Manchester Crown Court; a multi-faith day included a visit from members of the Jewish and Sikh communities; a coffee morning was organised by pupils to raise money for cancer care and an aspirations day, which focused on the rule of law and individual liberty, included a BBC radio broadcast from the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance has improved over the past few years and is now almost in line with other schools nationally.
- The school's positive behaviour policy is effective in promoting good behaviour both in and out of school. Pupils' manners are excellent as are their attitudes to school in general. Pupils exude a buzz of excitement because they want to learn at every opportunity.
- Bullying in school is extremely rare. Pupils spoken to could not recall an instance of bullying in school, although they did say that children fell out or disagreed on occasions. Pupils said that when this happened differences were sorted out quickly, sometimes with the help of adults.
- Pupils' good behaviour across the school contributes significantly to their strong progress. Pupils respond quickly to adults' requests, instructions and questions so that very little learning time is lost, for example when changing from one activity to another.
- Pupils do not demonstrate outstanding behaviour in enough lessons because opportunities to learn through developing ideas, exploration and experimentation, or from their own mistakes, are missed. This, in turn, means that they have fewer opportunities to develop and demonstrate their confidence and self-assurance in their learning. On occasions, pupils' behaviour is shackled because teachers' planning is too inflexible to allow for spontaneous learning.

Outcomes for children and learners are good

- By the time pupils leave the school, many achieve high standards. As pupils progress through the school, they make good progress from their different starting points. Some groups, such as the most able, make excellent progress in a wide range of subjects including English and mathematics. A small proportion of pupils are identified by the school as requiring additional support in order to reach the levels of which they are capable. Strategies, which include, for example, additional reading support, are successful and almost all of this group of pupils achieve as well as their peers in school.
- Leaders' evaluation of the progress of different groups is not sufficiently focused. However, evidence gathered by inspectors during their observations of learning and by scrutinising pupils' books indicates there is no discernible gap in the rates of progress of boys and girls at the school.
- As a result of early identification and well-thought-out support programmes, pupils who are in danger of falling behind, including those with special educational needs, make rapid progress. On the whole, gaps in achievement between these pupils and their peers are closed quickly.
- The teaching of reading is effective across the school. Pupils take books home and their reading records show that they read often. The pupils spoken to each had a favourite author and were able to describe in detail the reasons for their choice of reading materials. Books available in the school library and in some classrooms give pupils a wide selection of different styles of writing from which to choose.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next steps. Their strong attainment, coupled with positive attitudes to learning and high moral standards, ensure pupils are ready to hit the ground running when they enter high school.

Early years provision is good

- Safeguarding procedures are effective. Outdoor areas, used frequently by children in the early years provision, are safe and secure. Good leadership and management ensure children are supervised well and their welfare needs are met sensitively by a team of caring adults.
- Children build strong relationships with the teachers and their assistants because routines are established effectively. As a result, children in the early years provision trust adults and begin to develop their

communication and language skills rapidly. Inspectors observed children in the Nursery class initiating conversation with their peers and with adults. This is a sign of rapid progress in children's language development.

- Children's behaviour is good; they play and work well together. Children respond to the requests and instructions of adults quickly, moving swiftly from one activity to another with a minimum of fuss. For example, children in the Nursery class were observed by inspectors to quickly put down their equipment in order to gather and put on their coats ready to take part in an outdoor listening activity. Children's good behaviour in this instance contributed well to their progress.
- From their various starting points, children's reading, writing and numeracy skills progress well. Good teaching of the basic skills, particularly in the Reception class, ensures that, on the whole, children are ready for their move into Year 1. However, opportunities to raise standards even further in the early years provision are sometimes missed. For example, Nursery children who are adept at registering themselves when they arrive at school each day are not always encouraged to record that they have taken part in other activities. Furthermore, outside play areas and the resources available there are not always used effectively to ensure children begin to associate objects with words, numbers or phrases.
- Children's outcomes are not yet outstanding because every aspect of their development is limited by the lack of free movement between the Nursery and Reception classes and, for both groups, direct access to the main outdoor play area. Children in the Nursery class do not benefit enough from the opportunity to mix frequently with children in the Reception class. Routines to escort children quickly to the outdoors are planned well. However, children sometimes miss the opportunity to develop their own ideas because their play outside is structured around specific times. This means that strong learning in the classroom is, on occasions, not built on effectively enough when children go outside.

School details

Unique reference number	105598
Inspection number	10007691
DfE registration number	352/6041
Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Manchester Islamic Educational Trust Ltd
Chair	Mr Farroukh Zaheer
Headteacher	Mrs Adia Ali
Annual fees (day pupils)	Nursery £5,025; Main school £4,800
Telephone number	0161 445 5452
Website	www.muslimprepschool.org.uk
Email address	a.ali@muslimprepschool.co.uk admin@muslimprepschool.co.uk
Date of previous school inspection	Previously inspected by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate

Information about this school

- Manchester Muslim Preparatory School is an independent primary school which was established in 1994. The school, located in the Withington area of Manchester, is part of Manchester Islamic Educational Trust Ltd, which also runs two secondary schools nearby.
- The school aims 'to provide a broad and challenging curriculum set within an Islamic ethos which aims to promote high academic and moral standards'.
- The school makes provision for girls and boys aged between three and 11 years of age. At present there are 172 pupils on roll.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is well below average.
- There are slightly more girls than boys on roll at the school.
- The proportion of pupils who use a language other than English as their first language, while in school, is low. However, a good proportion of pupils come from families who do not use English as a first language.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspectors observed several part-lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- The inspectors observed all aspects of the school's work including a visit by pupils to a local football club.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work and at the school's records of their progress.
- The inspectors held meetings with, or were in contact with, senior leaders, staff, pupils, parents and a range of other professionals, and also considered the responses by parents on the online questionnaire Parent View.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school.
- The inspectors checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Drew Crawshaw, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Woodyatt

Ofsted Inspector

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