Inspection of Rochdale Islamic Academy

36 Taylor Street, Rochdale, Greater Manchester OL12 0HX

Inspection dates: 30 November to 2 December 2021

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 are taught to be sympathetic and conscientious British citizens. They are proud to make a difference in their community. For instance, they have organised collections for the local food bank and undertook litter picking and car washes to raise money for charity.

Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They know that staff care about their education and welfare. Pupils said that staff resolve the rare instances of bullying. Pupils develop their confidence and self-esteem through the responsibilities they have, for example as members of committees and leading assemblies. This helps to prepare pupils well for the future.

Pupils said that there are adults in the school who help with any concerns. Parents and carers appreciate leaders' care and support of pupils' well-being. They also value the family and community ethos of the school. Pupils particularly enjoy the extra-curricular activities, such as boxing and calligraphy. Older pupils are important role models for other pupils.

Pupils work hard and are ambitious about their futures. They are keen to learn, often asking thoughtful questions. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils know teachers are ambitious for them to be successful. This results in pupils trying their best in all aspects of school life and succeeding.

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

The headteacher, trustees and governors have a strong commitment to preparing pupils for the next stage of their education. The staff spoken to expressed their belief in the 'moral purpose in preparing pupils to be successful in modern Britain'.

Leaders and staff are determined that each pupil will benefit from a quality education. Leaders have created a purposeful and effective culture for learning. Subject leaders have the knowledge that they need to lead their subjects well. Staff receive training that enhances their subject knowledge.

The curriculum is ambitious and well thought through and pupils study a broad range of subjects. Leaders have made sure that the curriculum builds on what pupils already know. They ensure that teachers have clear guidance on the important knowledge that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should learn and remember well. The SEND team adapts learning so pupils with SEND can access a curriculum that is tailored to meet their individual needs. This helps them to achieve well from their starting points.

Staff promote a love of reading through carefully chosen books which are used across the curriculum. Leaders promote the importance of reading across the curriculum. For example, they have invested in a wide range of interesting books in the newly developed library. Leaders have identified the key vocabulary that pupils

will need to access the curriculum. For example, pupils learn and remember subject-specific and technical terminology in science and mathematics.

In most subjects, teachers check how well pupils understand the information taught before they introduce new ideas. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are secure in these subjects. However, in a few subjects, assessment information is not always used effectively to check how well pupils have understood their work. As a result, some teachers do not adapt learning to help pupils think deeply about a topic and build on what they already know.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are extremely polite, respectful and well mannered. Pupils contribute to each other's learning during lessons through high levels of debate and discussion. Disruption to lessons is rare. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and understanding for each other's views.

Staff provide well for pupils' wider development. Personal, social, health and economic education helps pupils to learn about democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and tolerance. Relationships and sex education enables pupils to learn about healthy relationships and how to respect themselves. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to debate current issues such as racism and sexism. Pupils work hard in this area and are proud of their achievements.

The proprietor body has a secure oversight of the school's work. The trustees and governors use their extensive knowledge and experience effectively to hold leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. They also work effectively with leaders to make sure that all of the independent school standards are met. This includes ensuring that the accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders have published the safeguarding policy on the school's website.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. There has been much work by leaders to develop pupils' and parents' awareness of online safety. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have. Staff receive relevant training and updates. They are aware of issues pupils may face and know how to respond to and manage any incidents.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a minority of subjects, teachers do not routinely check what pupils know and understand before introducing new learning. When this happens, pupils struggle to make links to previous learning. Leaders need to ensure that teachers accurately assess pupils' understanding in order to make effective decisions about

what to teach next. This will ensure that pupils deepen their learning across the curriculum.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

School details

Unique reference number	134575
DfE registration number	354/6006
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10203826
Type of school	Independent school
School category	Other independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Muslim Education Association
Chair	Sohail Ahmed
Headteacher	Arshad Ashraf
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,100
Telephone number	01706347344
Website	www.riab.org.uk
Email address	info@riab.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the school's first standard inspection.
- Following a material change inspection in January 2020, the proprietor body changed the single mixed school into two separate schools, one for boys and one for girls. This was the first inspection of the boys' school.
- 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science and geography. They held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors also talked to pupils about their learning and scrutinised their work.
- In addition, inspectors considered other subjects as part of this inspection. They held discussions with the subject leaders and sampled pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders and reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with trustees and the chair of governors. They reviewed a range of documentation, including that related to governance.
- Inspectors talked to staff and pupils. They analysed the responses to Parent View, including free text responses. There were no responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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