

# Afifah School

86 Clifton Street, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 9GN

## Inspection dates

14–16 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Satisfactory

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher leads the school in a calm, focused way. He strikes the right balance between his strategic leadership role and the day-to-day running of the school. He has ensured that the school is compliant with all of the independent school standards.
- Leaders are continually looking for ways to improve in their desire to provide the highest-quality education for their pupils. To this end, they are very outward-looking, working with a range of external agencies and the local authority.
- Despite the school's small size and limited resources, leaders ensure that pupils have access to a broad curriculum.
- The personal development and welfare of its pupils is at the heart of the school's ethos and culture. Pupils leave Year 11 very well prepared to take an active part in modern British society.
- Children who attend the pre-school benefit from high-quality provision as a result of strong leadership.
- Most pupils benefit from good teaching that enables them to learn successfully. Opportunities for leaders to raise the quality of teaching further across the school are limited as there is no ongoing professional development programme for staff.
- Throughout their time in school, pupils make good progress and attain standards that are at least in line with national averages.
- Leaders do not monitor effectively enough the progress of the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that targeted support for these pupils is not as effective as it should be.
- The actions that leaders have taken to improve attendance have had some impact. However, too many pupils are still not attending school regularly, particularly in the primary phase.
- Pupils are routinely respectful, polite and helpful to their peers and adults.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management further by:
  - providing more opportunities for professional development to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best, so that all pupils achieve their potential
  - monitoring more effectively the progress of the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and ensuring that they receive the right amount of support to achieve well.
- Continue to work closely with parents to reduce further the number of pupils who do not attend school regularly, particularly in the primary phase.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school community very effectively in a calm and focused manner. Staff, parents and pupils all speak highly of the leadership of the school. Many of them speak of the family ethos that is at its heart. This nurturing environment enables pupils to thrive and develop their confidence. Genuinely positive and mutually respectful relationships exist across the school.
- Leaders are very outward-looking. Leaders recognise that theirs is a small school with limited expertise in some areas. They seek to overcome this by forming working relationships with, and drawing ideas from, other organisations. Unusually for an independent school, they are working closely with the local authority to improve leadership, teaching and outcomes across all phases. The local authority representative who spoke to the inspector acknowledged how responsive leaders are to guidance and support, and that they 'wanted to get it right'.
- Leaders, trustees and governors have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. The headteacher acknowledges that the existing school improvement plan needs to be more specific about the actions required and how these will be monitored and evaluated.
- Some middle leaders, known in school as coordinators, are relatively new to their posts and consequently it is too soon to see the impact of their actions. That said, it is clear that this group of leaders have the capacity to effect change across the school. Senior leaders understand that they must support these middle leaders in holding all staff to account, for example by challenging those staff who are not adhering to the school's marking and assessment policy. The work of the development coordinator and pastoral coordinators is already making an impact across the school.
- Leaders have an appraisal system that supports and challenges staff whose performance is not good enough. It also enables leaders to reward staff whose work leads to very strong outcomes for pupils. Although the majority of pupils benefit from high-quality teaching, leaders are aware that some inconsistencies exist. Opportunities for leaders to raise the quality of teaching further are limited. Many staff work part-time and childcare commitments mean that they are unable to stay after school for development sessions. Trustees and governors now understand that staff need access to ongoing professional training if they are to develop their practice.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, with 100% of those who responded to the questionnaire saying that they would recommend it to another parent. Indeed, many have done so. Parents who spoke to the inspector at the beginning of the school day were also extremely positive, with one parent describing the school as 'absolutely fantastic'. Several of these parents spoke of how well the primary school had prepared their children to make a successful transition to different secondary schools.
- Staff are very positive and proud to work at the school. All 26 staff who completed Ofsted's inspection survey responded positively to all the questions. Several commented on how much leaders are driven to continually improve the school for the benefit of its pupils. One member of staff stated: 'We are a small school trying to make a difference.'

- Despite the size of the school and its limited resources, leaders ensure that pupils have access to a broad curriculum that gives them experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic education. Pupils also enjoy a range of enrichment activities outside of school. For example, as part of the science week that was taking place during the inspection, girls from different year groups in the secondary school were visiting Manchester University.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a very high priority for leaders, and is evident in the warm relationships that are prevalent throughout the school community. There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils, particularly those in the secondary phase, to develop this aspect of their education. For example, they take part in a range of fundraising activities for a number of local, national and international charities. Pupils are encouraged to contribute and make a positive difference to society. Recently, girls in key stage 4 received particular praise for the work that they did with an organisation that helps to provide education and healthcare to people around the world. Girls at Afifah School leave Year 11 very well prepared to be active citizens and leaders in modern Britain.
- The committed work of leaders has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

## **Governance**

- The chair of governors is also one of the trustees. He is one of the 'founding fathers' of Afifah School and is totally committed to driving its future development. Governors and trustees are aware of the challenges that lie ahead related to funding, resources, staffing and premises, as the larger cohort of Year 7 pupils progresses through the school. Governors know the strengths of their school well and the areas that require further improvement. For example, they have focused recently on improving the quality of teaching across the primary phase of the school.
- Governors and trustees have ensured that the school has continued to improve since the last inspection. This has happened while the school has gone through a period of expansion.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and leaders fulfil their statutory duties in this area effectively. The school's safeguarding and child protection policies comply with the latest government requirements and are available on the website. Systems to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with children in the school are secure.
- The school works with an external organisation to deliver safeguarding training to all staff to ensure that they understand their responsibilities. Alongside the general training on potential areas of risks for children and young people, staff have also undertaken further specific training on 'Prevent' and female genital mutilation. If staff join the school throughout the year, the headteacher ensures that they receive this training during their probationary period.
- Particularly impressive is the effective work that the school does to raise pupils'

awareness of potential areas of risk, and to empower them with the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Most pupils benefit from high-quality teaching. The positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils make a significant contribution to the quality of learning across the school. The small class sizes mean that teachers know their pupils very well and are able to plan learning to meet their individual needs.
- In the primary phase, the strongest teaching is in key stage 2. Teachers cope well with the challenge of teaching mixed-age groups. They ensure that older pupils and the most able younger ones are working at a higher level than the others in the class.
- In most lessons teachers use their expertise and passion for their subjects to engage pupils in their learning. This happens particularly in religious studies and computer studies. In these subjects teachers are very clear when explaining aspects of learning and check that pupils have understood before moving on.
- Teachers create a culture in their classrooms in which pupils are confident to ask for clarification. Pupils are keen to offer their ideas and engage in discussion with their peers. They value the support and care that they receive from their teachers. One pupil summed this up by saying: 'Teachers make us feel confident in ourselves.'
- Leaders are aware that some inconsistencies exist in the quality of teaching across the school. For example, a scrutiny of pupils' work revealed that not all teachers have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve, or adhere to the school's assessment and marking policy.
- The school has a system to assess the progress that pupils are making. Parents receive clear information about how their children are progressing. They have the opportunity to discuss this in more detail at parents' evenings. Staff are also available to meet with parents whenever they have any concerns.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. It is at the heart of the school's ethos and culture.
- Pupils in the secondary phase are thoughtful, confident and articulate. They have a strong sense of their Islamic identity which is complemented by a knowledge and understanding of the diverse nature of modern Britain. Pupils learn about different religions. They are taught to be respectful of others, for example those of a different religion or sexual orientation.
- Pupils in both the primary and secondary phases benefit from a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme which is delivered during form time. The leader of PSHE provides high-quality materials that enable all teachers to deliver effective sessions. The secondary programme includes a range of topics that contribute significantly to the girls' welfare and safety. For example, there is a three-week

unit on female genital mutilation and an eight-week unit on tackling radicalisation and extremism that is set in the context of how language can divide us.

- All the pupils who spoke to the inspectors are very proud of their school and feel very happy and safe here. They all describe their school as a family in which everyone cares for each other. Pupils in key stage 3 value the help that they get from the older girls, who they describe as their 'role models'. This family ethos in which all pupils look out for each other means that incidents of bullying and unkindness are very rare.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance. During key stage 4 they have a fortnightly careers session. The school works with an external company to develop the girls' application and interview skills. Leaders encourage the girls to have high career aspirations and equip them with the knowledge and skills to be successful.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful to each other and adults. They are very welcoming and helpful to visitors.
- Pupils value their education and, consequently, they have a very positive attitude to their learning. During lessons they are actively engaged in their studies, which helps them to make good progress. This positive attitude to learning, however, does not always translate to pride in the presentation and quality of pupils' written work. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils in this area and accept work that is untidily presented.
- Leaders have taken a range of actions to improve the attendance of some pupils. They have worked closely with the parents of pupils who have a particularly poor attendance record and this has made some impact. The attendance figure for secondary pupils is now broadly in line with the national average. Although the figure for primary pupils has improved significantly from last year, it still remains below the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In 2016, the standards that pupils achieved at the end of Year 11, across a wide range of subjects, were above national averages. The outcomes for pupils in English, science, religious studies and computer studies were particularly impressive. There has been a steady improvement in examination results over the last three years.
- The standards that pupils achieve show that throughout their time in school, they make good progress from their respective starting points. The school's own assessment information indicates that a high proportion of current pupils are on track to meet their target grades.
- The most able pupils are ambitious and benefit particularly from high-quality teaching. Consequently, a significant number of these pupils attain the highest GCSE grades.
- Leaders do not track the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively enough. This means that support for these pupils is not targeted as well as it should be to ensure that they achieve well. Special educational needs funding is used to support these pupils but leaders do not evaluate the impact of how it is spent effectively enough.

- As the school does not receive additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, leaders do not identify and track the performance of these pupils as a separate group. However, leaders ensure that they identify any barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils might encounter and take action to overcome them.
- The small number of pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve standards that compare favourably with national figures. Leaders are aware that the progress that pupils make in key stage 1 is not as good as in key stage 2.
- Destination information for pupils in Year 11 shows that they are being very well prepared to progress to further education. The outcomes that they achieve enable most of them to go on to study A levels. A high proportion then go on to university.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years provision is organised into a separate pre-school unit and a Reception class.
- Leadership of the pre-school is strong. The manager is well respected by her staff. She knows the strengths of her team and has correctly identified any professional development that they require. Parents are well informed of their children's progress and they speak very highly of the pre-school.
- Generally, children make good progress during their time at pre-school. They are well prepared for moving up into the Reception class or to other schools in the wider community. All children have English as an additional language and are making good progress in learning English.
- Pre-school staff know their children well and have a secure understanding of their learning and development requirements. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-led activities throughout each session.
- Leaders are aware that the pre-school premises do not reflect their commitment to providing high-quality provision for the children. Staff do their best to ensure that the rather 'tired' accommodation provides an appropriate environment for learning.
- Children continue to make generally good progress throughout their time in the Reception Year. By the end of the early years foundation stage, most children achieve a good level of development and make a successful start to key stage 1.
- Safeguarding arrangements for children in the early years are robust. Children are safe and comfortable. They approach staff readily. Strong positive relationships exist in both the pre-school and Reception Year. Children are taught how to behave appropriately and develop important skills for the future such as sharing and cooperating with each other.
- The independent school standards as they relate to the early years are met.

## School details

Unique reference number	134469
DfE registration number	358/6018
Inspection number	10026011

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Islamic faith school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Number of part-time pupils	32
Proprietor	Afifah Academy
Chair	Mr Chunara
Headteacher	Mr Abdul Huy Malek
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,500 secondary £3,000 primary and pre-school
Telephone number	01618 721516
Website	<a href="http://www.afifahschool.co.uk">www.afifahschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:afifahschool@outlook.com">afifahschool@outlook.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2008

## Information about this school

- Afifah School is an independent day school. It caters for pupils aged two to 16 years. There are mixed-gender classes in the early years and primary phase, but girls only in the secondary phase.
- The school was registered in 2001. It is situated near Manchester city centre in a residential area of Old Trafford. It is a school with an Islamic religious character.

- The school's aim is to develop 'every student's mind, body and soul, by promoting academic progress and nurturing their intellectual, physical, spiritual and social potential for the benefit of the wider community.'
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector toured the school site accompanied by the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. They observed pupils' conduct in lessons and at other times during the school day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher; the chair and two other members of the governing body; other leaders; members of teaching staff following observations of their lessons; and with three groups of pupils. An inspector listened to a small number of pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupils' work from the primary and secondary phases.
- Inspectors reviewed documents to confirm compliance with the independent school standards and provide other inspection evidence. These documents included various policies; health and safety records and other safeguarding information; data relating to past and current pupils' achievement; self-evaluation and improvement plan; minutes of meetings; and the admissions and attendance registers.
- The lead inspector took account of the 26 responses to Ofsted's 'Parent View' survey, as well as talking informally to parents at the start of the school day. The lead inspector also considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Anne Seneviratne, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Madden	Early Years Regulatory Inspector

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