

# Abrar Academy

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Abrar Academy is located in a residential urban area of Preston city centre. The school building is a converted church and opened in March 2009 when it was first registered. This is the first inspection of the school. Abrar Academy is registered for up to 220 students aged from 11 to 16 years and currently, there are 70 students on roll, most of whom are in Year 7 or Year 8. There are smaller numbers of students in each of Years 9 to 11. The students are organised mainly into five year group classes for lessons. All students are Muslims. No students are identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. All students speak English as their primary language. Admission to the school is selective and consideration is given to academic criteria.

The school has recently applied to the Department for Education to make a material change. The request is to extend the age range of students to 21 years and to provide a post 16 education. The maximum numbers of students would remain the same. This application was considered by the inspectors and the judgement and evidence are contained in the report.

The school aims to:

'Provide an opportunity to study the traditional Islamic sciences alongside secondary education (GCSE) and to educate boys over the age of eleven in a safe, secure, happy and Islamic environment.'

## Evaluation of the school

Abrar Academy provides a good quality of education and meets its stated aims very well. This is a new and improving school. Leaders have successfully established a satisfactory curriculum which provides well for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teaching is good and, combined with the students' excellent attitudes to learning, this results in good progress. Behaviour is outstanding and provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Outstanding provision is made for students' welfare, health and safety and safeguarding arrangements meet all the requirements. The request for a material

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

change is approved. All the regulations for continued registration as an independent school are met.

## Quality of education

Overall, the curriculum and other activities are satisfactory and meet the range of needs and interests of students. The Islamic curriculum is good and outstanding provision is made for the memorisation of the Qur'an. The secular curriculum is satisfactory providing much of the National Curriculum for students in Key Stage 3 and a suitable, but narrow, range of GCSE options in Key Stage 4.

The Islamic curriculum is taught each morning and consists of two main levels of study. Level one, which is studied for two years, provides for learning Urdu, Arabic language and literature, sarf (morphology), Tajweed (art of correct pronunciation) and the Fardh Ain of Deen (religious studies). Level two is studied for four years on the successful completion of Level one; it provides Fiqh (jurisprudence), Tafseer (translation and the commentary of the Holy Qur'an), Hadith, Usulul Hadith and Usulul Fiqh. The Islamic curriculum also provides opportunities for students to study Islamic Theology over a period of six years. The school seeks to accredit this work in the future leading to a degree-level qualification. Several aspects of the secular curriculum are taught concurrently in the Islamic studies including history and geography.

The secular curriculum in Key Stage 3 provides English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), humanities, personal social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, art and Arabic. In Key Stage 4, GCSE courses are provided in English Language, mathematics, dual-award science, religious education (RE), PSHE/citizenship, ICT and Islamiyat. Non-examined PE is also provided. Vocational studies are not offered as options. Advanced plans are in place to extend the range of GCSE courses through links with Preston College. These courses have been offered for some time in the partner girls' school, along with AS and A-level options. The outcomes of these, as judged by the most recent Ofsted inspection in January 2010, are outstanding. The same arrangements will be provided for Abrar Academy as a result of the material change.

PE is provided through timetabled martial arts lessons and indoor games. In good weather the boys enjoy taking part in cricket, football and cross country in a nearby park. However, the school does not ensure that outdoor PE activities are regularly provided. Some visits are organised for students such as to a local observatory and to a theme park. These enrich and enhance the curriculum. There are many visitors to the school from the local community which contributes well to students' personal development. There are few visitors to enhance the academic curriculum.

Teaching and assessment are good and meet the full range of students' needs. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Most lessons observed were good in both Islamic and secular subjects. The style of teaching varies from formal instructional approaches, to lessons in which students have many opportunities for discussion and problem solving. This variation

is a strength. Staff are adept at matching the best approach to suit the content of the learning. For example, the memorisation of the Qur'an involves much recital and rote repetition to which students respond well. On the other hand, in a mathematics lesson there were opportunities for students to explore problems and learn from each others' ideas.

ICT is used effectively by teachers to present lessons, interest the students and sustain their concentration. The quality of lesson planning varies. In some, objectives for students' learning are too broad and simply describe activities. In others, they contribute well to learning because they contain clearly identified skills or knowledge to be learnt. All lessons are structured so that students' learning progresses well. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Homework is a regular feature in lessons and is used effectively to extend learning. There is variation in the quality of teachers' marking. Some is hard to read. Many have praiseworthy comments. Some have constructive advice as to how to improve the work.

In outstanding lessons, the pace of delivery is rapid, expectations are high, questions are probing and open-ended and the style of teaching is skilfully varied to cater for students' different learning needs. For example, in an Arabic lesson clear learning objectives ensured the students learned how to construct sentences with adjectives in Arabic. The lesson was conducted in English to keep the pace of understanding high. The students were all involved due to targeted questioning and regular opportunities to engage in Arabic. In satisfactory lessons the planning is vague, teachers talk for too long and mundane tasks such as lengthy copying mean that students lose interest and the pace of learning slows.

Assessments are in place to measure students' attainment on entry to school, at the end of each unit of work and by biannual tests to establish National Curriculum attainment levels. The process of analysing students' progress by using the outcomes of these assessments is at an early stage of development. Assessments are used well to inform parents and to set targets for students' learning. Targets set are challenging and a minimum of good progress is expected.

Students make good progress in their learning. Good teaching ensures that students acquire the core skills and knowledge which will equip them well for further education and adult life. Work in books shows good progress overall. The school's data demonstrate that progress for the first cohort of Year 7 students (current Year 8 students) is good overall. Questionnaires received from parents are unanimous in their support for the school and they agree that students make good progress.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The quality of provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. The school enables students to develop their self esteem and confidence very successfully. Students enjoy school and their attendance is good. Staff are excellent role models for students to aspire to, treating everyone with great respect and consideration. In return, students respond with outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning. The spiritual focus of daily life in school shines through the

delivery of lessons, the relationships between staff and students and in the regular opportunities to pray together. Socially, students learn many skills and have lots of opportunities to mix together within the school environment and in the local Islamic community. They work together cooperatively with an understanding of others' needs and interests so that school is a harmonious and peaceful place to learn. Opportunities for social development in the wider community, such as by linking with other schools, are not yet a regular feature of school life. The students told the inspectors that in such a small school they miss the chance to mix with larger peer groups. Cultural development is strongly supported within the Islamic community. The citizenship curriculum ensures students are knowledgeable about British culture such as learning about the monarchy, the electoral system and British democracy. Students learn about other faiths and beliefs and develop an appreciation and respect for other cultures. A link has been made with a college in India. These global links are few and are not well established or embedded. Students are well prepared for future adult life attaining good levels of basic skills.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The overall welfare, health and safety of students is outstanding. Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements. Suitable risk assessments are completed for the school's premises and for trips out of school. Staff are appropriately trained in first aid, fire safety and in child protection procedures. The school meets the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Students are encouraged and given guidelines to sleep well, eat well and learn well. A healthy tuck shop, healthy lunch boxes and a health promotion officer promote healthy lifestyles. Physical activity during breaks, lunchtime and in PE lessons develops students' good attitudes towards daily exercise. Students say they are very well cared for by staff. They feel safe and feel they can confidently turn to an adult for help if they need to.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

All the required safeguarding checks on staff are made, such as those by the Criminal Records Bureau, and are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

## **Premises of and accommodation at the school**

The school's premises and accommodation enable students to learn effectively, safely and securely. The material change requested can be suitably provided within the existing accommodation as the maximum number of students will not increase. The accommodation is arranged on two floors which have been carefully renovated to keep many architectural features of the listed former church building. Classrooms on the ground floor provide for the Islamic curriculum and are furnished in traditional style with low wooden benches. On the first floor, classrooms provide for the secular

curriculum and are arranged with ICT equipment and suitable furniture. There is a science laboratory, an ICT suite and several offices. On the ground floor there are two large carpeted halls which provide for PE and collective worship. Outside there is a narrow hard surface on three sides of the building providing a pedestrian access to the main front entrance. The school also makes use of the nearby park for outdoor recreation.

## **Provision of information**

The school provides clear and up to date information on its website. Annual reports give parents and carers information about the attainment and progress of students. A prospectus is available to prospective parents and carers and this gives all the required information about the school's policies, procedures and contact details.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's complaints policy and procedures fully meets the requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- Improve the quality of the curriculum by
  - increasing the number of GCSE courses in Key Stage 4
  - ensuring that students engage in regular outdoor physical education
  - expanding the range of visits and visitors to enrich students' learning experiences.
- Improve students' cultural development by
  - developing links with other schools to provide students with opportunities to socialise and learn with their peers in different environments
  - develop international links to increase students' awareness and understanding.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim day school		
<b>Date school opened</b>	March 2009		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-16		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 70	Girls: 0	Total: 70
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£1300		
<b>Address of school</b>	34-36 Garstang Road Preston Lancashire PR1 1NA		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 828 732		
<b>Email address</b>	info@abraracademy.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Adam Esmail		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Fazel Wadee		