

Ar-Rahmah Academy

Independent school standard inspection report

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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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Ar-Rahmah Academy is an independent Islamic school registered to provide education for boys and girls aged between five and 16 years. There are currently 26 pupils on roll aged five to 16 years. The school aims to 'provide secular education, meeting relevant standards, with special emphasis on literacy and numeracy, within an Islamic environment'. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. All of the pupils have English as an additional language. Located in Chorley, the school building is within a short distance of the local mosque, and a local authority sports facility which is used by this and other local schools. The school was opened in June 2008 and was last inspected in April 2009.

Evaluation of the school

Ar-Rahmah Academy provides a good quality of education which ensures that pupils achieve high academic standards within a supportive Islamic environment. Pupils' personal development is outstanding as is their behaviour in all areas of school life. The school cares well for its pupils and ensures that they are suitably safeguarded. However, some aspects of routine administration and record-keeping are not sufficiently organised and as a result arrangements for welfare, health and safety are satisfactory rather than good. The school has made steady progress since the last inspection and now meets the requirements of all the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum for pupils of all ages is good. They have access to all the required areas of learning with increasing breadth of experience as they progress through the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy. Pupils are taught to read confidently and they make good progress with their handwriting, spelling and grammar. They demonstrate good progress in working with numbers and enjoy the challenges of learning multiplication tables and the four rules of number. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs but the teachers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in learning of each individual pupil. All pupils are taught in small classes

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

where they receive the attention they need to stimulate their interest and ensure they enjoy learning.

In Key Stage 3, pupils demonstrate the ability to apply the basic skills which they have developed earlier. They make good progress, for example in understanding science, in working out calculations in mathematics for themselves, and in learning about the environment in geography. In Key Stage 4, pupils are provided with a range of GCSE subjects and work successfully towards good examination results in English, mathematics, science, humanities and religious education. In addition, recent leavers from Year 11 achieve success at GCSE in Arabic and Urdu and those pupils currently in Year 10 are making similar progress. The curriculum is relatively formal and presented confidently by committed teachers who make sure that each pupil receives work at a suitable level of challenge. Pupils in Year 10 value the good opportunities they have to use information and communication technology for research and for the presentation of examination work. The range and content of subjects studied prepares pupils well for further learning when they leave school. However, although pupils receive specialist careers guidance, they do not have the opportunity to take part in experience of work in order to prepare them more fully for the experiences and responsibilities of adult life.

The Islamic dimension to the curriculum enables pupils to understand and value the beliefs and traditions of their own culture. This is achieved successfully through assemblies, lessons in Islamic studies and appropriate references in a range of other subjects. Although it was not part of this inspection, pupils also speak highly of the learning they experience in the madressa after school each day. Important aspects of personal, social and health education (PSHE) are covered in assemblies and in a range of subjects across the curriculum. However, the teaching of PSHE is not organised in a way which guarantees that all pupils have consistent experience of all the themes and topics included in the scheme of work.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Lessons in all year groups mostly proceed at a good pace. No time is wasted and pupils remain engaged and interested throughout their lessons. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. They make sure that pupils always know what the objectives of the lesson are and how far they have progressed in meeting their personal targets. Good use is made of visual resources, including digital projectors and video clips, as a focus for discussion and analysis. Teachers use oral questioning effectively to help pupils think deeply about what they are learning, for example in science, mathematics and religious education. Pupils are encouraged to consider the structure and content of their writing, using different forms of speech, tone, imagery and personal interpretation, for example in analysing poetry. Satisfactory lessons do not move along at such a lively pace and pupils are not all provided with challenging work which develops their individual skills and understanding to levels of which they are capable. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent, showing mutual respect and a genuine willingness to listen to each other. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly; they are made aware of the levels at which they are currently working and what they need to do to improve. As a result of good teaching and the suitable range of subjects studied, pupils make

good progress. In some cases progress is outstanding with very creditable attainment in GCSE courses. Pupils develop self-confidence and excellent learning habits and generally make faster progress than expected.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. The school has created an environment in which positive values are communicated consistently. Pupils are encouraged to learn from their own culture and beliefs and to translate these into action in their daily lives. They understand the difference between right and wrong and treat each other and their teachers with courtesy and respect. Themes discussed, for example in religious education, encourage them to develop respect and tolerance for the beliefs and values of other cultures. Teachers provide them with opportunities to discuss controversial topics and to be able to justify their personal views with reasoned argument. As a result, the school is a learning community in which common beliefs are reinforced appropriately and differences are respected. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have positive attitudes to their work and sustain their concentration throughout lessons at all ages. They can work independently when required, and help each other or contribute confidently to class discussions. Pupils develop self-esteem and personal responsibility in the secure environment provided throughout the school.

Some successful actions have been taken to develop links with the wider community, for example a local church and primary school. Mutual visits have been exchanged and pupils speak positively about the experience of having pupils from the primary school visit their mosque. Pupils also value friendships which they have established in the wider community. Pupils have contributed generously to charitable collections and they take on small responsibilities around the school. Lessons, particularly in English, geography and religious education, provide pupils with good opportunities to understand the role of public institutions and services in England. While older pupils in particular demonstrate a genuine interest in events in the wider and global community, there are limited opportunities for them to take on significant responsibilities within the school and the local community.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for in the school and their safety and enjoyment of school are given a high priority by the staff. School policies, for example for behaviour management, child protection and safety on off-site visits, take account of statutory guidance and are implemented consistently. All staff, including the designated person for child protection, have been trained to the required levels. There have been no incidents or any requirement to use any sanctions for serious misbehaviour since the school opened. Routine checks on the maintenance of the building and all aspects of fire safety are completed appropriately. However, the monitoring of policies and procedures and the recording of routine actions are not well organised and, as a result, the routine testing of portable electrical appliances has not been renewed

recently at the required intervals. Arrangements have now been put in place for this work to be completed immediately, together with a check by an external contractor on all aspects of fire safety to supplement the school's routine checks. The school's first aid policy is implemented appropriately and suitable arrangements are in place to care for any pupil who may be ill during the school day. Admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with requirements.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school implements all the required checks on the suitability of the staff and proprietors to work with pupils. Details of all the required checks are recorded in a suitable single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation provide a suitable environment for safe and effective learning. There are sufficient classrooms of appropriate size to accommodate the current numbers of pupils. A well-used library of reading books and text books has been established in an accessible location, open to all pupils. Toilets, washrooms and facilities for any pupils who may be ill meet requirements. There is no external play space on the school site but pupils have daily access to a nearby park which is also used regularly for physical education lessons.

Provision of information

The school provides all the required information, together with a satisfactory summary of its work and aims in its prospectus. Parents and carers are made aware of their right to request copies of all the required school policies. Annual reports are provided for each pupil giving good information about the subjects studied, together with details of pupils' progress in each subject and in their personal development.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's procedures for the management of any complaints meet statutory 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.

- Audit the current provision for PSHE and create a record to demonstrate that all pupils are taught the planned content in a suitable way and at appropriate times.
- Consider how pupils in Key Stage 4 might be provided with experience of work in order to prepare them for the responsibilities and opportunities of adult life.
- Increase the range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility within the school and the local community.
- Improve the organisation and monitoring of routine administration and record-keeping.

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Islamic day school		
Date school opened	June 2008		
Age range of pupils	4-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 19	Total: 26
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£780 to £840		
Address of school	142 Lyons Lane Chorley Lancashire PR6 0PJ		
Telephone number	01257 220067		
Email address	info@ar-rahmah.org.uk		
Headteacher	Yasir Nisar		
Proprietor	Ar-Rahmah Academy		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 December 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ar-Rahmah Academy, Chorley, PR6 0PJ

I am writing to thank you for the welcome which you gave me when I visited your school recently. The inspection judged that Ar-Rahmah Academy provides you with a good quality of education. I enjoyed visiting your classrooms and seeing the way in which you all take part in lessons and complete your work to a high standard. I was pleased to see that the youngest pupils make a very good start with learning to read and write. The quality of your handwriting is very good by the time you move into the secondary classes. I was also impressed by the quality of the relationships between staff and pupils. You show respect and courtesy to all the adults in school, and they make sure that you receive all the help you need to improve your work.

By the time you reach Year 10, you have made good progress in your learning. I was very impressed with the way in which you prepare to take GCSE examinations in a good number of subjects. It was also good to see how you are prepared to think deeply and to offer your own ideas and opinions on a range of current topics. I have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that you all have PSHE lessons and to consider how experience of work might be provided for pupils in Years 10 or 11. You clearly enjoyed visiting the local church and having pupils from the primary school visit your mosque. I have also recommended that more opportunities should be provided for you to take on responsibilities in the school and in the local community.

You attend a good school which prepares you well for the future. You can play your part in making sure that the school continues to grow and develop by working hard and continuing to join in enthusiastically in all that the school offers you. I would like to wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Young
Lead Inspector