

Abrar Academy

34–36 Garstang Road, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 1NA

Inspection dates 5–7 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Pupils' achievement	Outstanding	1
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Quality of curriculum	Outstanding	1
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

This school is outstanding because

- Very astute leadership and management have made significant improvements to the quality of provision and outcomes since the last inspection.
- Teachers consistently provide outstanding lessons which enable students to flourish and achieve as well as possible.
- The rich, imaginative curriculum provides a sparkling array of very stimulating opportunities for students to develop their basic skills in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and Islamic studies.
- Students love the comprehensive education they receive, especially the excellent balance between secular and Islamic studies.
- Extremely good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that students always behave impeccably and mature into very thoughtful young people.
- Outstanding provision for the welfare, health and safety of students ensures that they feel very safe and know how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by eight different teachers. Meetings were held with leaders, staff and students.
- The school's documentation was checked including teachers' planning, records of students' progress, self-evaluation of how well the school is doing, and the provision for students' welfare, health, safety and safeguarding.
- Although there were too few responses on Parent View for the inspector to take account of, a small number of letters from parents and carers were received during the inspection giving their opinions. Questionnaire responses from three staff were also analysed.

Inspection team

Saleem Hussain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school opened in March 2009. It is located in Preston, Lancashire.
- The school is registered as an independent, day, Muslim faith school for up to 220 boys aged from 11 to 21 years.
- Currently, there are 65 students on roll, including a small number aged over 16 years.
- There are no students with a statement of special educational needs.
- Students are of mainly Asian heritage. All students speak English as their primary language.
- Admission to the school is selective and consideration is given to academic criteria.
- 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.'
- Some students aspire to ultimately become imams and scholars.
- A nearby park is used by the school for physical education (PE) including sports such as cricket, football and cross country.
- The school's previous inspection of education took place in December 2010 when it was judged that it provided a good quality of education and met its stated aims very well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is always outstanding by eliminating the small minority of good teaching through sharing best practice between teachers.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Outstanding

Achievement is outstanding at this lovely school because teaching and the curriculum are extremely good. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 for most students is broadly average. By the time students leave school their overall achievement is outstanding, most notably in English, mathematics, the sciences, Urdu and Arabic. Year 11 students perform very well in GCSE examinations compared to others in secondary schools nationally. A high number of Year 10 students took mathematics and the sciences early, in 2013. Remarkably, all of these students gained a good grade in each subject. Based on their starting points and capabilities, almost all students make rapid and sustained progress in most areas of learning over time, far exceeding nationally expected progress. This includes those who are gifted and talented and post-16 students. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to plan interesting, real-life based experiences for students and this approach is very effective in securing their interest and participation in lessons. Students develop and apply a very wide range of skills including those for reading, writing, communication, mathematics and ICT. Excellent, focussed support in the classroom ensures that all students achieve equally well. For example, interventions to help lower-ability students are very effective in closing gaps in learning between them and students of a similar age nationally. As a result of all these factors, students are exceptionally well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Students' achievements in Islamic studies are outstanding. For example, almost all students make excellent gains in their knowledge of the Qur'an and the five pillars of Islam. It is very pleasing to note that many students have memorised the Qur'an since the school opened.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Students' behaviour, attitudes and personal development are outstanding. Students are articulate, sensible and extremely respectful towards others. Their behaviour is exemplary and this makes a significant contribution to learning. Relationships between students and between them and adults are excellent. Students' comments included 'the school is like a big family'. Attendance and punctuality are excellent. Students show great enthusiasm in lessons, volunteer their ideas readily and are very quick to ask questions to extend their knowledge and understanding. The school is very orderly and peaceful. School records and discussions confirm that incidents of serious misbehaviour and bullying are extremely rare. Students say that they feel safe at all times and know what to do if they feel bullied. They have done much work in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) lessons around dealing with different forms of bullying and 'bullying boxes' around the school enable them to report any concerns.

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Work during registration periods, assemblies, PSHCE lessons, Islamic studies and through visits and visitors enables students to develop and mature into very thoughtful young people. They develop their self-confidence through reciting *Azan* (the call to prayers), leading prayers and undertaking responsibilities such as monitor or prefect, very willingly. Students have a clear sense of right and wrong. In a discussion about gender equality, students were passionate in speaking out on equality issues, demonstrating their very high regard for all women, most especially mothers. Students develop excellent social skills and are rightly proud of their contribution to the school and the wider communities. The school council provides many opportunities for students to learn about democracy and give their ideas for school improvement. Students give their time generously to fundraising for good causes. They also annually visit a hospice to comfort people and also take part in 'food drives' to collect for the homeless in Preston. The school provides students with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England. Students learn very well about Parliament, British values and also the civil and criminal law. Visitors include local

magistrates to support students' understanding. The proprietor has ensured that partisan political views are not promoted in school. Students show very high levels of appreciation and respect for different cultures, beliefs and traditions. Religious education lessons enable students to learn about other faiths and visiting speakers include a Christian Priest and a Buddhist.

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

The quality of teaching in all key stages and in most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good. This ensures that almost all students make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points. Lessons start on time and move along very quickly so that students get through much work. Very stimulating presentation of work captures students' imagination from the outset and fully involves them in learning. Teachers question and prompt students very skilfully. This ensures that all students work equally hard and use their own initiative to learn. Teachers frequently check students' understanding throughout lessons, intervening only when necessary. All teachers have very high expectations of all students. They use their excellent subject knowledge to plan very challenging work in all areas of the curriculum. Electronic whiteboards are very well used to support learning. For example, in an excellent PSHCE lesson in partnership with the fire service, students benefitted greatly from the video presentation around fire safety and citizenship matters. Basic skills in mathematics and literacy are taught very effectively. For example, in mathematics students are given a very thorough grounding to develop problem solving skills and in English, many opportunities to develop their speaking, reading and writing. Assessment is excellent. Students' key skills are evaluated accurately on entry to the school and progress is tracked very carefully. Teachers evaluate the effectiveness of each lesson and use this as a basis to modify subsequent work to ensure that students achieve outstandingly over time. Marking is very good. Comments in students' workbooks ensure that they know how well they are doing and how to improve further.

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

The curriculum and other activities are outstanding. This ensures that students' needs and interests are fully met. The curriculum is very well planned. Schemes of work are detailed and show clear pathways for all students to make progress and achieve as well as they can. Students enjoy the sparkling array of opportunities to gain memorable experiences in all the required areas of learning. Provision for PSHCE is outstanding, making an excellent contribution to personal development. Opportunities to develop basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT are very effective, resulting in students attaining very highly in these subjects. The school has very good arrangements in place to provide careers guidance and work experience. For example, an external agency works closely with older students to develop their career aspirations and all students in Year 11 are offered work-related experiences. The provision for post-16 students meets their needs and interests very well. There are many opportunities for students to gain accreditations in a wide range of secular and Islamic studies. Islamic education is outstanding. It comprises of two main levels of study. Level one, which is studied for two years, includes learning 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. This includes *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Tafseer* (translation and the commentary of the Holy Qur'an) and *Hadith* (teachings of the prophet). The school also offers the *aalim* (Islamic scholarship) course, which comprises of two main levels of study. The school also offers the *hafiz* (memorisation of the Qur'an) course. Educational visits and visitors enrich learning. For example, students annually visit Alston Observatory to support their studies in science.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All of the regulations in these regards are met. The school has a very caring and highly supportive ethos. Staff are totally

committed to students' well-being and treat this as a top priority. Arrangements for staff recruitment are of a very high standard. The school carries out all of the required checks to ensure that all adults in school are suitable to work with children. Checks are recorded as required on a single central register. The designated officers for child protection and all other staff are trained appropriately regarding child protection. All safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that they stay abreast of the latest requirements. The school's first aid policy is effective and a good number of staff are fully trained in administering first aid (significantly more than is legally required). Risks to students' safety are identified very carefully, including for activities in and out of school and staff are provided with clear guidance on managing any issues. Fire risk assessments are rigorous and the school meets all requirements regarding fire safety. The school's policy to promote outstanding behaviour is very effective, resulting in consistently exemplary behaviour. Students place high value on the certificates, praise and rewards they receive for their attendance, behaviour and achievements. The school's anti-bullying policy is very effective. Students say that they routinely enjoy healthy lifestyles and know how to stay safe in and out of school.

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Leadership and management are outstanding. Parents and carers are rightly pleased with the quality of education provided. The effectiveness of the school's leadership can be seen in students' outstanding achievements; behaviour and personal development; teaching; curriculum and provision for welfare, health and safety. Leaders' highly determined and uncompromising pursuit of excellence lies at the heart of the school's success. Improvement since the last inspection is remarkable, most notably in terms of students' achievement and attainment, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders ensure that students make outstanding progress in their development of literacy, mathematical and ICT skills. Leaders communicate high expectations and ambition very effectively. Teachers are pleased with the arrangements for professional development. The headteacher and senior managers work very closely with all staff and everyone shares a common purpose. Self-evaluation is very good and the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Senior managers frequently check and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum. They know that the quality of teaching in all key stages and in most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good. The school's ability to carry on making improvements is excellent. Leaders have already started to further develop monitoring systems to eliminate the small proportion of good teaching and share best practice across the school so that it becomes consistently outstanding. The proprietors have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. The school's premises are excellent and very well maintained. The provision of information for parents and carers and the manner in which complaints are to be handled fully meet requirements. The school works closely with parents, carers and several external agencies to ensure that students achieve outstandingly.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	135822
Inspection number	422795
DfE registration number	888/6109

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school	Muslim faith school
School status	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11–21 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al Badr Islamic Trust
Chair	Mr Wadee Fazl
Headteacher	Mr Anayath Chowdhury
Date of previous school inspection	01 - 02 December 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,300
Telephone number	01772 828732
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	info@abraracademy.com

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