

Hamd House School

The Custard House, 29-43 Blake Lane, Birmingham, West Midlands B9 5QT

Inspection dates

6–8 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is exceptionally well developed. Pupils are highly confident and acutely self-aware, relishing the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life as British Muslims.
- The impressively broad curriculum contributes significantly to pupils' academic achievement and personal development.
- Leaders ensure pupils achieve exceptionally well in English and mathematics and that outcomes in other subjects are set to improve. This is despite limitations to resources and lack of staff in key positions.
- Pupils' work in English and mathematics, in all year groups, is a long way ahead of the standards expected for their ages.
- Pupils' work in some other subjects is less impressive. In science, history and geography, for example, pupils' work is not as good as it should be for their ages.
- Strong, trusting relationships enable pupils to take risks in their learning and push themselves to achieve more.
- Teaching in English and mathematics is highly effective. Consequently, pupils achieve exceptionally well in these subjects.
- Teaching is less successful in some other subjects. For example, in science, history and geography, teachers check what facts pupils know, but do not assess pupils' skills well enough. As a result, pupils do not systematically think like scientists, geographers or historians.
- Pupils are deeply reflective learners. They sustain concentration in lessons for long periods of time and work productively. Their behaviour is impeccable. At work or at play, pupils conduct themselves politely, with dignity and with respect.
- The headteacher balances his many responsibilities exceptionally well. His view of what the school does well and what needs further work is precise and accurate. He frequently seeks external verification of his judgements and acts upon suggestions made.
- The founder of the school, in an advisory capacity, supports the headteacher well in improving the quality of teaching. The founder seeks and uses external challenge to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met.

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 associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up the actions that are underway to improve standards in subjects other than English and mathematics by:
 - sharpening up assessments so that teachers can identify, and pupils know precisely, what skills they need to learn next
 - ensuring that teachers build pupils' scientific, historical and geographical skills, rather than focus exclusively on acquisition of factual knowledge.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is highly successful in ensuring that the school achieves the founder's vision to provide a safe and secure learning environment that upholds the ethos of the Muslim community and enables its pupils to integrate successfully into British society. He has created a culture in which all staff actively model and promote this ambition. As a result, pupils develop a sophisticated understanding of their role in modern Britain and are exceptionally well prepared to make a positive contribution to its society.
- The school's limited resources are used exceptionally well to ensure that pupils' outcomes are good and are improving further. This is testament to the commitment of all staff and the considerable skill of the headteacher, who is currently the only full-time senior leader. He balances the conflicting demands on his time exceptionally well, ensuring that pupils are kept safe and receive a good quality of education. For example, the headteacher currently coordinates the provision for pupils who are supported by an education, health and care (EHC) plan, until a designated staff member can be appointed. His work in this area means that statutory responsibilities for these pupils are met and they receive a good education, well suited to their needs.
- The curriculum provides an impressive range of opportunities and activities, which gives pupils a vast array of meaningful experiences. For example, pupils learn Mandarin and Latin as well as English. They experience a wide variety of physical and creative activities: horse riding, kick boxing, graffiti art and Japanese origami to name but a few. Visits and experiences are carefully planned to support all areas of the curriculum and to promote specific aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils learn about Tudor dancing as part of their history studies. The design and implementation of the curriculum contribute substantially to the very high standards in English and mathematics and to pupils' personal development. Therefore, the curriculum prepares pupils well to take their place in modern British society.
- Leaders place great emphasis on preparing pupils to engage confidently in any social situation. This is one reason why leaders provide such a wide range of extra-curricular experiences. In addition, leaders' decision to provide elocution and general knowledge lessons ensures that pupils become socially capable individuals. They enthusiastically engaged inspectors in interesting conversations about a range of topics.
- The headteacher has a razor-sharp view of the school's effectiveness. He translates this into clear, manageable plans to tackle key areas that need attention. For example, last year he identified that reading outcomes for younger pupils were lagging a little way behind those of writing and mathematics. He took action and pupils' reading has improved as a result.
- The headteacher is well supported by the founder of the school in achieving improvements to its work, by the provision of resources and professional development for staff. For example, last year the founder allocated the necessary funding to purchase new reading books. This enabled the school to achieve the desired improvement in reading standards.
- The school works very effectively with other organisations and agencies. Specialist staff from Birmingham City Council provide valued help for the pupils who are supported by

EHC plans. The headteacher communicates appropriately with the local schools' safeguarding officer, multi-agency support teams for child protection and other groups as needs arise.

- An external consultant, commissioned to work with the school for one day per week, provides very effective support to the headteacher in the drive to maintain high-quality teaching where it exists and to secure improvement when needed. The headteacher sources appropriate training for staff when weaknesses are found and checks to see if this investment is making the required difference. He has demonstrated that decisive action will be taken if teaching fails to meet the high standard expected for the school's pupils.
- As the school has expanded to cater for secondary-age pupils, leaders have introduced a structured approach to providing information, advice and guidance to help pupils make informed choices about career options. This programme is in the early stages of implementation, but is starting to have an impact on raising pupils' aspirations.

Governance

- The school does not have a governing body. Nevertheless, accountability is central to its culture. Pupils have very high expectations of themselves and strive to fulfil these. Teachers ensure that pupils uphold high standards in their work and behaviour. The headteacher holds teachers to account for sustaining the quality of teaching. He seeks accountability for himself by testing out his evaluations of the school with the founder, who has a substantial background in education. In turn, the founder utilises the expertise of independent education consultants to provide external challenge to the school. Advice is readily acted upon at all levels. As a result, the independent school standards are met and the school provides a good, and improving, quality of education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe are fit for purpose and take into account current government requirements. Staff are well trained in how to implement these policies and well supported in dealing with concerns about pupils' welfare.
- The school does not currently have a website. It is under development. Consequently, the safeguarding policy is not available on the internet. The policy was provided to inspectors immediately upon request. It is readily available, should parents wish to view it.
- The headteacher, as the designated lead for safeguarding, carries out the role assiduously. All concerns are taken very seriously, logged immediately and followed up thoroughly. For example, a response in a lesson once gave rise to concern that a pupil may be exposed to extremist views. The headteacher immediately sought advice from counter-terrorist police and referred the case to the local authority. Subsequently, the headteacher took action to re-affirm with parents the school's commitment to protecting pupils from radicalisation. On another occasion, a parent's application to place his child at the school was refused on the grounds that the headteacher felt the parent's views may pose a risk to the safety of pupils and the ethos of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their pupils very well. This helps teachers nurture pupils in lessons, nudging and prompting them to keep challenging themselves to achieve more and more. This is one reason why pupils work so hard in lessons and produce impressive work in many lessons.
- Teaching in all subjects makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and spiritual, moral social and cultural awareness. Teachers help pupils become highly reflective, and to value the learning of others. Pupils show the utmost respect for their classmates. This was demonstrated in the genuine appreciation shown by a group of Year 8 pupils when listening to each other as they read the writing completed during the lesson. The process of writing challenged pupils personally to deepen and refine their understanding of a controversial question. Their self-knowledge, moral certainty and respect for others' viewpoints were significantly enhanced by the experience.
- Teachers ensure that pupils use accurate basic skills in all their work. Pupils' books show that teachers always insist on correct spelling, grammar and punctuation, regardless of the subject matter being taught. Teachers also insist that pupils use high-quality English and precise technical vocabulary when speaking and writing in lessons. This leads to pupils becoming confident, effective communicators.
- Teachers ensure that lessons promote equality and do not discriminate against any individuals or groups. Resources used promote equality between genders. Boys and girls learn together comfortably. Pupils who are supported by EHC plans are well provided for. The allocated support staff know these pupils' needs well and are skilled in adapting learning tasks to help them make good progress. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve equally well.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' English and mathematics skills are incisive and rigorous. Consequently, teachers know precisely what pupils need to work on next. Well-structured lessons and pupils' mature attitudes to learning lead to these next steps being achieved very quickly. As a result, pupils make exceptionally rapid progress in English and mathematics and achieve very high standards.
- Teaching is not of the same quality in all subjects. In some, including science, geography and history, teachers' assessments focus on pupils' factual knowledge, rather than on identifying what subject-related skills pupils have acquired. Consequently, neither teachers nor pupils know precisely which ones need to be learned next. As a result, pupils' outcomes are not as high in some subjects as they should be. This is the reason why teaching is judged to be good and not outstanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally confident and self-assured. They show deep and genuine respect for one another, their teachers and the wider community. They have a clear sense of their identity as young British Muslims. They can articulate how the values of this country are implemented through their faith. Their exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development equips them extremely well to be thoughtful, active, productive and caring citizens of modern Britain.

- Pupils have a sophisticated understanding of how the school equips them with the skills and attributes they need to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and challenges of adult life. They express aspirations to be successful in a range of careers and, in doing so, to contribute positively to society.
- Pupils are able to consider, discuss and debate challenging or controversial issues in an impressively mature way. For example, a group of key stage 3 pupils discussed with an inspector the importance of individual liberty. Pupils rationalised that it is impossible to change a person's feelings or beliefs by force. They went on to explore the differences between countries that have the freedom to hold individual beliefs and those that don't.
- The culture of the school actively promotes pupils' welfare. Pupils are taught how to stay healthy and safe. They know about the dangers associated with social media and can describe sensible precautions they take to protect themselves.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying does not happen in the school. They said that the small size of the school would give a bully 'no place to hide'. No parents reported any of their children being bullied. The school's record of sanctions imposed for poor behaviour show no incidence of bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their conduct is impeccable at all times.
- Pupils take full responsibility for their actions. If a rule is broken, pupils graciously accept their wrongdoing and the associated sanction, such as the loss of a playtime.
- In lessons, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and classmates. They follow instructions immediately and without fuss. They work studiously and conscientiously without the need for reminders.
- Pupils move from lesson to lesson quietly and quickly, ensuring that no learning time is lost. They hold doors open for each other, always remembering to say 'Thank you.'
- When in the playground, pupils play happily together, enjoying each other's company.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils achieve exceptionally high standards in English and mathematics. From the point at which pupils join the school, usually at the beginning of Year 1, they begin to make rapid gains in reading, writing and mathematics. This progress is sustained across each year group. By the time pupils leave the school, the standard of their work in these subjects is often equivalent to that required for good GCSE grades. For example, pupils in Year 8 produced writing during the inspection that would justify the top grade at GCSE level, an examination typically taken by pupils at the end of Year 11. Pupils' mathematics books contained work of similarly impressive standards.
- Pupils communicate extremely well. This is because they are systematically taught how to construct and deliver a reasoned argument on a range of topics, through elocution and

general knowledge lessons. Several pupils have entered, and been successful in, public speaking competitions.

- Pupils learn to speak Mandarin. Inspectors were impressed by the confidence with which pupils engaged in conversation with the teacher using this language.
- Pupils of different abilities and needs achieve equally well. This means all groups of pupils, including the most able and those who find learning more difficult, reach very high standards in English and mathematics. Pupils who are supported by an EHC plan make good progress as a result of the effective provision made for them by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Nevertheless, pupils' achievement in some subjects is not as good as it could be. For example, pupils have a secure factual knowledge about science, history and geography. However, they do not demonstrate that they can think and reason scientifically, geographically or with the understanding of young historians. The standards reached by many pupils in these subjects are lower than they could be by the end of Year 8, given pupils' ages and their abilities. This is why outcomes are good overall and not outstanding.

School details

Unique reference number	131687
DfE registration number	330/6097
Inspection number	10033384

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	Muslim faith school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Proprietor	Sumair Masoud
Headteacher	Sumair Masoud
Annual fees (day pupils)	£0 to £2,400
Telephone number	0121 448 1630
Website	Under development
Email address	head@hamdhouse.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 May 2010

Information about this school

- Hamd House School is an independent Muslim day school that is currently registered to provide full-time education for boys and girls aged five to 13 years.
- The school admits pupils from across the Birmingham area. Although all current pupils are from Muslim families, the school is open to all children.
- The school aims to provide a safe and secure learning environment that upholds the ethos of the Muslim community and aims to integrate its pupils successfully into British society.
- The school is a member of the Association of Muslim Schools, UK.
- Four pupils are supported by education, health and care plans, funded by Birmingham City Council.

- The school is currently seeking to recruit a deputy headteacher.
- The school has applied to the Department for Education for permission to extend its provision to cater for pupils up to age 16. The outcome of the application is yet to be confirmed.
- If the application is successful, the school name will be changed to Bridge House Academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning by visiting lessons, talking to pupils about their work and scrutinising the work in their books.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils in lessons and at break times. A formal meeting was held with a group of pupils from key stage 3.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other school staff to discuss the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness; plans for improvement; evidence of pupils' outcomes; provision and outcomes for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; the quality of teaching; the school's curriculum, including provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and arrangements for safeguarding.
- Checks were made to ascertain the school's compliance with the independent school standards: inspectors examined policy documents; checked the school's premises; and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors took into account 20 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, discussions held with parents during the inspection and the 15 questionnaires submitted by school staff.
- A range of documents was examined, including: leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness, curriculum policies and schemes of work; the school's assessment information; leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and plans for improvement. Records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sandra Hayes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Tyrer	Ofsted Inspector
Philippa Darley	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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