

North Road Academy

North Road, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2BP

Inspection dates

16–18 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and other leaders have high expectations for all staff and pupils. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have clear plans to improve the school further, but they do not regularly check the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain because adults consistently and effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The majority of pupils, from early years to key stage 4, are making good progress. Attainment is similar to national outcomes at all ages.
- Behaviour is good and almost all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, when lessons are not well matched to their needs, pupils lose focus and learning time is lost.
- Older pupils have access to independent careers advice and guidance. As a result, pupils are well supported in making informed choices about the next stage of their education.
- Pupils of all ages develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills across a broad range of subjects. The curriculum includes a balance of secular and religious subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons to meet the needs of the majority of pupils. However, lessons do not always provide enough challenge for the most able and this slows the progress that they make.
- Lower-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are increasingly well catered for. However, sometimes they are too reliant on support from an adult and struggle to make progress independently.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are generally accurate. Leaders now have systems in place to track pupils' progress across the school, but they are not yet using this information consistently well to maximise pupils' progress.
- Safeguarding is effective. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe, including reducing the risks associated with extremism.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - there is appropriate challenge and support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, those who are less able and those who are most able
 - all adults are clear about what these pupils need to learn next in order to move their learning forward and improve their independent learning skills.
- Embed recent development in leadership and management, by:
 - further improving the use of assessment data to maximise pupils' rates of progress
 - monitoring the impact of actions to strengthen the quality of education provided further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, and his leadership team demonstrate a strong commitment, drive and determination to provide a high standard of education and to ensure that pupils get the best start in life. All staff share this strong sense of purpose and ambition.
- Leaders ensure that the school consistently meets all the independent school standards.
- The headteacher has recently expanded and strengthened the school's leadership team. Each member brings a high degree of skill and knowledge to their role. Together, they demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. Leaders have introduced a number of new initiatives across the school. However, they are not yet able to demonstrate the impact of these approaches on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Where necessary, they provide additional advice and coaching for staff. To support developments, staff have access to a range of effective training and development opportunities. These take place in school, online and via external providers. Leaders are not yet routinely monitoring the impact of this input on classroom practice.
- The school has developed systems to identify and assess effectively pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Additional teaching assistants and a specialist teacher provide increased levels of in-class support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are less able. Some pupils now have 'passports' to ensure that all staff are clear about the pupils' individual needs and how they can be helped to maximise their learning. The impact of this additional support can be seen as pupils grow in confidence and become more active learners.
- The school has a significant proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the school year. The needs of pupils who are new to the school are quickly assessed, to ensure that any gaps in knowledge are addressed and to enable them to access additional input as required.
- Leaders and staff make a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British values, including democracy and tolerance, are taught alongside Islamic values. The school environment is rich in displays and opportunities to celebrate all aspects of pupils' development, such as artwork, links with other schools, healthy eating, and charity events. Pupils also learn about a range of different faiths and cultures, visiting various places of worship and celebrating diversity. Pupils are encouraged to broaden their experiences and understanding to be able to make informed choices in relation to their lifestyle and faith. As a result of these opportunities, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is an effective balance of secular and Islamic studies. Pupils of all ages study a broad range of subjects based on the national curriculum, including English; mathematics; science; computing; humanities; religious education; physical education; citizenship; and personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils also follow courses in Islamic studies, Qur'anic studies and Arabic. As a result, pupils develop a

breadth of knowledge, skills and understanding which they are encouraged to apply across subjects. Older pupils follow a range of GCSE and other courses leading to recognised qualifications.

- Regular trips and visitors further enhance the school's curriculum. For example, some pupils spoke enthusiastically about a forthcoming geography field trip. Pupils also benefit from having access to a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities such as baking, coding, camping and a range of sports.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. This can be summed up in a comment from one parent: 'My children love their school as it allows them to feel safe and to dream. I feel confident that North Road Academy is doing its best for my children to grow into educated and well-behaved individuals.'

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping children safe is central to the work of the school and leaders have created a culture where all staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As a result, the school is a safe environment for pupils and they are well cared for at all times.
- All staff have regular and appropriate child protection and 'Prevent' duty training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. They know how to report any concerns about pupils' welfare and they are vigilant in looking out for indicators of risk or harm. Leaders also have a clear understanding of the specific safeguarding concerns that relate to the context of the school.
- The safeguarding team maintains the required confidential records and, when appropriate, the team shares information with relevant external agencies. Leaders follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all adults appointed to work at the school.
- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and takes into account current government requirements. The policy is published on the school website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, the majority of teaching is effective and enables most pupils to make good progress. Classrooms are positive and purposeful learning environments. Adults have strong relationships with pupils and act as good role models.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, particularly at secondary level. This means that they are able to explain new ideas and concepts well. They question pupils effectively to deepen their understanding.
- Teachers plan lessons which are well suited to the majority of the pupils, those who are working at the standards expected for their age. However, some lessons lack challenge for the most able pupils. In mathematics, for example, the most able pupils are often expected to complete the same work as the rest of the class before moving on to more challenging extension activities. This slows their progress and may prevent them from reaching the higher standards of which they are capable.

- Conversely, in some lessons, tasks are not well matched to the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or are less able. This is because the teacher has not fully considered the next step these pupils need to take to move their learning forward. As a result, the pupils are given tasks which they cannot complete independently and so they are reliant on adult support. This means that these pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Pupils demonstrate a love of reading. They are confident readers and read with a developing fluency in line with their age. Pupils use their phonics skills well to decode unknown words and to help them spell new words. As pupils get older, they develop strong comprehension skills which they apply effectively across all subjects. Pupils' written work is equally well developed.
- Teaching in Qur'anic studies and Arabic is closely matched to pupils' individual needs. This is because teachers carefully track pupils' progress and provide additional support where necessary.
- Teachers give pupils regular and timely support for their work. This is effective for the majority of pupils because it helps them to know what they need to do next to improve.
- The school has taken effective steps to increase the involvement of parents by providing regular information via an electronic application and parents' meetings and encouraging them to support their children to complete homework. The school also provides parents with termly information about how well their children are progressing.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress using a variety of approaches including classwork, weekly tests and published test materials that allow comparison to national standards. Evidence shows that teachers' assessments provide an accurate picture of pupils' current attainment. Leaders have started to monitor this information regularly. This is to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind or who are making weak progress and then to work with teachers to identify suitable interventions. However, leaders are not yet making maximum use of this information to support pupils' progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their achievements and their school.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous. They are keen learners and are committed to improving their work. The great majority take a pride in their work and their books are very well presented.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep safe, for example when using the internet or to reduce the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Leaders also ensure that parents are supported in keeping their children safe by organising parental workshops on relevant topics.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in learning. At the end of each school year, there is an effective handover of information from one teacher to another and pupils have opportunities to meet their new teachers.

- Secondary-aged pupils have access to high-quality, impartial, careers guidance that helps them to make informed choices about the next step in their education; for example, which college courses might suit their academic needs and aspirations. Pupils spoken to indicate a desire to enter a range of different professions including law and medicine. Pupils have opportunities to visit a range of further education providers and Year 10 pupils all take part in relevant work experience. The school has had two cohorts of pupils complete Year 11. All of these pupils have gone on to positive and sustained placements in education, employment or training.
- Pupils' welfare is paramount. Staff complete regular health and safety checks and risk assessments. This is to ensure that the school environment and activities are as safe as possible and that risks are minimised.
- Pupils know the importance of keeping themselves healthy and making informed choices about healthy eating.
- Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to school life and the wider community, such as improving the local environment and raising money for local charities. They have the opportunity to take on a range of school-wide responsibilities such as Wudhu and Salaah monitors, lunch hall monitors and assembly monitors. All classes elect pupils to act as their representatives on the school council. Pupils feel that the school council can make a real difference to the life of the school, for example by influencing options that are available on the lunch menu or raising funds to buy additional playground equipment. Pupils take these responsibilities very seriously and they are helping to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's behaviour policy is effective and focuses on motivating the pupils to behave well. Pupils and staff understand the policy and pupils say that teachers use it consistently. Behaviour in classrooms is generally of a very high standard, with most pupils being keen to learn. There is a sense of order and calmness throughout the school. School behaviour records show that adults are consistent in tackling negative behaviours and that there are few serious incidents of poor behaviour.
- Occasionally, when lessons do not match the needs of pupils or when the pace of a lesson drops, pupils lose concentration and learning time is lost.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms that it can take. Those spoken to were very clear that bullying is not something that happens in school. However, they were equally clear that if it were to occur, staff would deal with it quickly.
- School attendance levels are similar to those seen nationally. However, leaders are keen to improve this and have increased the focus on good attendance in recent months. This is starting to have a positive impact on overall attendance levels. Leaders track attendance carefully and promptly follow up any absence. They are working with external agencies to support engagement with families who are struggling to get their children into school. Leaders are alert to the possibility of children going missing from education and take appropriate actions to minimise any risk.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes across the school and across the curriculum show that the majority of pupils are working at the standards expected for their age. In the primary years, the use of standardised tests indicates that pupils in most classes are making progress in line with the school's expectations in reading and mathematics. Attainment is in line with that seen nationally. The use of published schemes of work and associated assessments, especially in the secondary classes, also indicate this to be the case in other subjects such as science, humanities and religious education. Pupils' work scrutinised during the inspection shows that most pupils are making good progress and achieving well across a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers regularly assess the quality of pupils' writing. Assessments are tracked over time and these indicate that the majority of pupils are making strong progress in developing their independent writing skills.
- There are small numbers of pupils in each cohort and high mobility makes tracking progress year on year challenging. However, leaders are increasingly monitoring pupils' progress and attainment at individual, class and subject level. Where this information shows variation in rates of progress between classes, leaders and teachers are addressing this through additional interventions and support. It is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' outcomes.
- All pupils who have completed Year 11 attained a range of GCSE and other qualifications. The majority achieved good passes in mathematics and science and at least a pass in English language and literature. This represents good progress over time.
- Most pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Outcomes show that some most-able pupils are achieving well and working above the standard expected for their age. However, a lack of challenge in some lessons means that too few pupils are having the opportunity to achieve higher standards. Leaders and teachers are taking action to address this but it is too soon to see the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Less-able pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make similar progress from their starting points as other pupils in school. There is evidence that these pupils are becoming more self-confident but the gap in attainment between them and other pupils in school is not reducing as quickly as leaders would like.
- While almost all pupils speak English as an additional language, very few are at the early stages of learning English. Classrooms are language-rich environments and the majority of pupils demonstrate strong reading and comprehension skills in line with their age and development.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress during their time in the Reception class and they are well prepared for their transition into Year 1. On average, they enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is a little above the national average.

- Many children join Reception from the nursery based on the school's site. Adults ensure that this transition is effective. The children currently in Reception have settled well and are making steady progress.
- The children are well cared for. Safeguarding procedures are effective and welfare requirements in the early years are met fully.
- Children's behaviour is good and they show respect for each other. They have a growing confidence and they are eager to join in activities. The children respond promptly to instructions from adults. There are warm and positive relationships between adults and children. Adults actively promote children's personal development and social skills.
- The early years learning environment, indoors and outside, effectively supports all areas of learning. Where possible, the early years curriculum is adapted to match children's interests and needs. For example, last year there was a particular focus on developing boys' writing through the provision of lots of meaningful writing tasks. As a result, most boys had made good progress by the end of the year.
- Throughout the day, adults respond well to children's interests, asking questions or developing tasks to extend their thinking and understanding. For instance, during the inspection, an adult adapted a resource which had engaged some children's interest to support their understanding of ordering numbers up to 10.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. Adults model vocabulary effectively and encourage the children to talk about what they are doing and learning. For example, when playing a game outside, adults used language relating to colours, size and position.
- Early literacy skills are taught through daily phonics lessons and the children are at an appropriate stage for this point in the Reception Year. The children are beginning to use their phonics skills to help them write new words.
- Adults plan an interesting range of activities for children. A detailed record of each child's progress is kept. However, not all the activities are sufficiently challenging to enable the most able children to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The early years leader has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision due to effective self-evaluation. Training for staff has a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Recent input to support children's speech and language development is being put into practice in the classroom and further training is planned to support the teaching of phonics. The early years leader has a good knowledge of the children and a secure understanding of their learning needs.
- Early years staff encourage regular communication with parents. This includes phonics and numeracy workshops to increase parental involvement in their children's education.

School details

Unique reference number	139071
DfE registration number	861/6008
Inspection number	10020795

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Naeem Bashir
Headteacher	Naeem Bashir
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,900 (Reception); £2,550 (key stages 1 and 2); £3,500 (key stage 3); £4,500 (key stage 4)
Telephone number	01782 829870
Website	www.northroadacademy.com
Email address	admin@northroadacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	3–5 December 2013

Information about this school

- North Road Academy is an independent Muslim faith school located in the Cobridge area of Stoke-on-Trent. The school is registered for up to 200 boys and girls aged from three to 16 years.
- There are currently 120 full-time pupils on the school roll from the Reception class through to Year 11.
- Pupils are of mainly Asian heritage. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language but very few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The headteacher is also the proprietor of the school. There are no trustees and no

governing body.

- The school is housed in a former local authority primary school. The premises were purchased in April 2011 and an extensive refurbishment was completed before the school opened in November 2012.
- The school's last full inspection was in December 2013. The school's overall effectiveness was judged to be good and it met all of the independent school standards. The school was originally registered for boys and girls up to the age of 11. This was extended to 14 years of age in December 2013. In May 2016, following a progress monitoring inspection where all standards were judged to be met, the Department for Education increased the school's capacity to 200 and extended its upper-age limit to 16 years of age. The school has increased its staffing to cater for the increased number of pupils on the school roll.
- The school aims to provide a caring, safe and enjoyable environment in which every pupil can discover and reach their potential. It aims to provide Muslim children with a high standard of education based on the national curriculum in addition to teaching Islamic studies and the Arabic language.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school shares the site with the North Road Nursery. The same proprietor owns the school and nursery. Ofsted separately inspects the nursery. The most recent inspection took place in September 2018 when the provision was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 22 lessons across all year groups and including a range of secular and religious subjects. A number of these observations were undertaken jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils formally and informally. One inspector listened to some pupils read. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including: records relating to safeguarding, attendance and health and safety; pupils' files; curriculum plans and schemes of work; school performance data; the school's website and the school's self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors considered parents' opinions through scrutinising 50 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 23 free-text responses. One inspector also spoke to a sample of parents on the second day of the inspection.
- Sixteen responses to the staff questionnaire were considered as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Satchwell

Ofsted Inspector

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