

Manchester Islamic High School for Girls

55 High Lane, Chorlton, Manchester M21 9FA

Inspection dates

29 September–1 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher and trustees have a clear vision for the school in preparing young British Muslim women to have high aspirations for their lives now and in the future.
- This vision is shared and understood by all in the school. It shapes the school's ethos and culture and underpins the arrangements for pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- The school is outward-looking and provides a wide range of experiences to help pupils understand and respect others.
- The school ensures that pupils feel safe, are properly safeguarded and know how to protect themselves from risks, including radicalisation.
- Pupils behave very well.
- As a result of excellent teaching, pupils make rapid progress. This leads to high attainment. Outcomes have risen over the last three years.
- Leaders provide a broad range of subjects. In addition, pupils have many opportunities to extend their experience through extra-curricular activities. These often relate to current issues and include work with schools of other faith backgrounds.
- Leaders and trustees have been successful in making sure that the school continues to improve.
- The headteacher and trustees have ensured that the independent school standards are met. Leaders use the standards as part of their work to ensure that the school remains highly effective.

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?

- Make sure that teachers seize opportunities to help all pupils to achieve even higher standards, by providing precise written feedback to improve pupils' work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The work of the school is shaped by its positive ethos which values the Islamic nature of the school and its context in Britain today. All members of the school community actively put this ethos into practice.
- Leaders are committed to enabling pupils to play their full role in the wider local and national community. They ensure that pupils actively develop aspects such as respect for, and tolerance of, others. The school's arrangements for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are effective. The school engages with local and national politicians, services such as the police and people from different faiths.
- The range of subjects is designed to give pupils a broad academic education. Where aspects may cause concern to parents, these are openly discussed. Leaders have had considerable success in giving parents confidence that their daughters will be properly looked after on school visits, including those overseas. The school places less emphasis on music and dance than other curriculum areas, although opportunities are offered through after-school clubs to further enhance these aspects. The art facilities have recently been enhanced and extended. As a result, pupils now have the opportunity to work on a full range of art projects and activities.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide coherent leadership which ensures that the school continues to improve; there is no complacency. Actions recommended at the previous inspection have been responded to. Leaders are prepared to take and act on the advice given.
- Senior and middle leaders sometimes have multiple roles. They know what is expected of them and work together well to ensure that the pupils are always their central focus. There is close monitoring of the work of all members of staff.
- Leaders know their school well. The school's self-evaluation document is detailed and links to the independent school standards, so providing a check that these continue to be met. The school improvement plan follows on from the school's self-evaluation, and identifies appropriate improvement actions.
- The organisation of the school is highly effective and the school runs efficiently.
- Highly effective training for teachers helps to make sure that the quality of teaching is continually refreshed and developed to a high level. Priorities are identified through the regular checks on teachers' performance.
- The responses to the inspection questionnaire indicate that those parents who responded are very satisfied with the school and its work. Likewise, the staff questionnaires indicate very high levels of confidence in the work of leaders.
- Staff and pupils are proud of their school. Pupils enjoy school and do well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is provided by the Manchester Islamic Educational Trust as the proprietor.
 - The trustees share the open and outward-looking vision for the school. They are knowledgeable about the school and the independent school standards.
 - The trustees provide strong but supportive challenge to the headteacher. They meet regularly with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
 - They manage the limited available resources well. They have ensured that these are used to enhance the school, such as in the improvement to computer facilities since the previous inspection and the very recent redecoration of most of the school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website. This policy is clear and up to date. It takes into account current government requirements. Leaders ensure that it is fully implemented so that pupils are properly protected. Leaders are acutely aware of potential risks which pupils may face and have ensured that staff and pupils are properly trained to minimise these risks. They work well with other agencies, including the local authority and the police, to ensure that pupils can quickly access services and information they may need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is very successful in helping pupils to make rapid progress and achieve high standards. Teachers' expectations are high.
- Teachers demonstrate the school's open approach in their teaching. It is understood that class discussion can and does include a wide range of ideas. Pupils are encouraged to develop their reflection skills by thinking about the different sides to difficult arguments.
- While teachers use a variety of approaches in class, there are common features which lead to pupils' success. These include positive relationships between teachers and pupils, very high standards of behaviour, good subject knowledge of teachers and the skilful use of questioning to build understanding. These were seen, for example, in a Year 9 French lesson where pupils were fully engaged and developed their knowledge and confidence. The teachers' probing questioning was precisely targeted at pupils' strengths and needs.
- Pupils are confident learners and are willing to try out new ideas without fear of failure.
- The relatively small class sizes and the good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils allow teachers to provide detailed verbal feedback which helps pupils learn more. Some teachers also provide very detailed written feedback to which pupils respond. The school has recently revised its marking policy and further training is planned to help teachers understand how to implement it in full.
- Teachers work together well to ensure that links between different subjects are emphasised. The school has good strategies to develop reading, in addition to that done in lessons. For example, all pupils read during one tutor time each week, and borrowing from the well-stocked library is carefully monitored. These approaches lead to pupils choosing to read a wide range of books ranging from modern novels for young people to English classics.
- Teaching is extended through a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits. These often link directly to work being studied in class. For example, a forthcoming visit to the European Parliament will follow up on a discussion of global warming in Year 11 AS general studies lessons.
- The school's arrangements for teaching personal, social and health education use day-long sessions which focus on specific issues. This allows for more detailed consideration of complicated topics, often with input from visiting experts. Working with the police has helped pupils to understand the risks they may face from extremism or radicalisation.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's positive ethos sets a context in which pupils can thrive.
- Pupils are given opportunities and encouraged to have a voice in the running of the school. The formal opportunities for this include a school council and a health and safety committee. Leaders listen to and, when possible, respond to what pupils say about the school.
- Respect for and valuing others are central to all aspects of the school. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to become more aware of others in a wide variety of situations. These have included pupils acting as homeless people in the school to raise awareness of this local issue and the continuing programme of links with King David High School, which serves the Jewish community, and Loreto College, a Roman Catholic college. Pupils undertake charitable work including, for example, raising over £23,000 in the last school year and older pupils helping to provide lunches for a local charity.
- Attendance rates are high and there is a careful system to check on any absence or lateness.
- The school's systems for ensuring that pupils are safe are effective. The site is fenced and CCTV is in operation throughout the school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using computers or smartphones. The school does not shy away from making sure that pupils have open discussions about sensitive issues.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of work and behaviour.

- The school is properly looked after by pupils and is friendly and welcoming.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. They work very hard and cooperate to ensure that everyone can learn.
- Teachers are aware of and respond to any slight reduction in concentration or effort in lessons. They ensure that pupils are very quickly back on track.
- Pupils say that there is very little, if any, bullying in the school. In addition, they are confident that, should issues of any type arise, staff would respond quickly to ensure that they are resolved. The school's records of more serious misbehaviour indicate very few incidents of any kind. These records also confirm that such incidents are followed up in a way which is likely to reduce any future re-occurrence.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils currently in the school learn quickly and make rapid progress. Inspectors saw this across different subjects and year groups.
- Leaders and teachers make sure that a starting point is established for each pupil as they arrive at the school, using commercially available tests. They then set demanding academic targets from these starting points. These targets challenge each pupil to progress at least as quickly as expected in other schools. The school's own tracking shows that, over time, pupils frequently make progress at a faster rate than this.
- In 2015, Year 11 pupils made substantial progress in English and mathematics. Groups of pupils with different starting points made progress at least as quickly as the rate expected nationally. A higher proportion than seen nationally made even faster progress. The standards achieved by pupils in their GCSE examinations were very high.
- The most able learn very quickly. In 2015, the progress of these pupils in Year 11 English and mathematics was more than expected nationally.
- Disabled pupils or those with special educational needs typically make progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- Pupils' rapid progress across the school means that they gain high standards. The standards reached by pupils as they leave the school have risen over the last three years.
- If progress is slower in any subject, leaders act swiftly to take steps to respond. For example, an additional teacher of English was provided. This enabled class sizes to be reduced and additional teaching to be provided for any pupils at risk of falling behind in English or mathematics. Leaders monitor the match of teaching time to the demand of all subjects. When necessary, they have adjusted the time allocation for some subjects at Key Stage 3 to make sure that pupils continue to make rapid progress.
- Pupils' development of wider learning skills is very effective. They are confident and articulate in describing their work and opinions.
- The school ensures that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Careers education is provided from Year 7. This builds aspiration as well as providing information about possible next steps. All Year 10 pupils undertake work experience which gives a real context to their understanding of the world of work. Almost all pupils progress to local sixth forms or colleges when they leave. Leaders continue to monitor pupils' careers after they have left the school which allows them to understand the school's longer-term impact.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 130318 |
| Inspection number | 10007534 |
| DfE registration number | 352/6040 |

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.

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| Type of school | Muslim secondary school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Girls |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 219 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | The Manchester Islamic Educational Trust Ltd |
| Chair | Farroukh Zaheer |
| Headteacher | Mona Mohamed |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £5,200 |
| Telephone number | 0161 881 2127 |
| Website | http://mihsg.org.uk |
| Email address | admin@mihsg.co.uk |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 February 2011 |

Information about this school

- Manchester Islamic High School for Girls is part of the Manchester Islamic Educational Trust Ltd. It opened in 1991.
- The school states that its aim is to deliver 'Islamic Education and the National Curriculum within a caring and nurturing environment, following an Islamic ethos and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).'
- The school is registered for 234 pupils. There are currently 219 girls on roll.
- No pupil has a statement of educational need or an education, health and care plan.
- The majority of pupils speak English as a second language, although none are at the early stages of learning English.
- The school was previously inspected by Ofsted on 1–2 February 2011. It received a monitoring inspection, undertaken by the Bridge Schools inspectorate, on 13 May 2014.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in lessons. They also observed tutor times and prayer times.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed throughout the school day.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, other members of staff, trustees, two groups of teachers and three groups of pupils. They also had informal conversations with a large number of pupils.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. Inspectors considered 147 responses to the same questions issued in a paper-based questionnaire, as part of the inspection. Questionnaires returned by 18 members of staff were also considered.
- School policies and other documentation provided by the school were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards and to provide other inspection evidence. Records including those relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour were also reviewed.
- The school's information on pupils' progress and attainment was scrutinised.
- Inspectors examined pupils' exercise books.

Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Eileen Mulgrew

Her Majesty's Inspector

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