

Islamiyah School

Address: Willow Street, Little Harwood, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 5NQ

Unique reference number (URN): 132749

Inspection report: 12 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress very well through the curriculum. They produce high-quality work that demonstrates a depth of understanding. Pupils, including those who face other difficulties in their lives, develop and secure the important knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils confidently articulate what they know and remember across subjects, using a clear grasp of subject-specific vocabulary.

Attainment in national examinations has been consistently above national averages over time. Many pupils secure high GCSE grades in English and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils also achieve consistently well in external examinations. By the time pupils leave the school, they have learned to write with fluency and confidence. This prepares them well to access the next stage of their education. Pupils move on to appropriate education, employment or training that matches their abilities and aspirations.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils understand why attendance matters and they attend school with enthusiasm. Overall attendance is above national averages. Persistent absence is rare. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders set a clear expectation with pupils' families about the need to come to school on time each day. Leaders do all they can to ensure that this happens. However, if a pupil's attendance starts to dip, leaders respond intelligently. Staff act swiftly and effectively, providing early, targeted support that helps pupils return to regular attendance patterns.

Pupils embody the school's expectations for behaviour, tolerance and respect. High standards of self-control and maturity are evident in classrooms and as pupils move around the site. Older pupils are excellent role models to younger pupils. In classrooms, pupils are switched on, engaging readily in both class discussions and individual tasks. Pupils have confidence that staff will deal with concerns, such as unkind behaviour or bullying, fairly and quickly. Leaders review behaviour systems carefully and provide targeted support where needed. A very small number of pupils receive additional help to improve their behaviour, and this support is effective.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders take a thoughtful and well-informed approach to understanding what pupils need in order to achieve well at school. They identify pupils' needs with precision. When pupils join the school, leaders carry out robust checks on what pupils know and can do. They draw on information from formal assessments and from pupils' primary schools. They use this, together with information from parents and carers where necessary, to devise plans to reduce barriers to learning in the classroom. The school reviews these plans frequently. Consequently, pupils receive timely, consistent and high-quality support.

Expectations are high for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Ongoing training ensures that staff expertly target support for these pupils so that they access the same challenging curriculum as their peers. This support successfully reduces any gaps in these pupils' achievement.

Pupils value the school's 'Going for Gold' provision, which provides additional guidance and wraparound support for those pupils who may need extra help for their wellbeing or to catch up with learning. For example, pupils who may have joined school later, have medical needs or are learning English as an additional language benefit from expert support.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes to leadership and governance, including the appointment of new leaders, governors and chair of the proprietor body. There is much to celebrate about the sharp action and collaborative work of school leaders and governors. In recent times, they have ensured that pupils' needs and interests are put first by rapidly embedding the school's policies and procedures.

Senior leaders know their school extremely well. They have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Leaders, including the proprietor and governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and where further focus is needed. They check the quality of education meticulously and take effective action to make continuous improvements.

The proprietor and leaders maintain effective oversight of the independent school standards and ensure that they are met consistently. The proprietor, together with the governors, fulfil their responsibilities with diligence. They understand the context of the school and provide robust challenge and support. They work with leaders to ensure that decisions remain focused on pupils' academic and personal development.

Staff appreciate the professional learning opportunities provided. For example, they have benefited from helpful training to develop their teaching practice, including on inclusive classroom strategies. The school's leadership has also supported staff to complete relevant professional qualifications. A strong sense of teamwork and common purpose stands out. There is a positive 'can-do' ethos that permeates the school. The vast majority of staff feel that their workload and wellbeing are well considered. There is an overwhelming sense of pride in belonging to the Islamiyah School family. This is shared among staff, pupils, parents and carers.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's approach to personal development champions girls to reach for the stars and to strive for their ambitions. Leaders provide an ambitious and well-structured programme for personal development that equips pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive beyond school. They provide rich opportunities for pupils to explore self-awareness, empathy and confidence-building. For example, pupils benefit from initiatives such as 'rise' club, which supports pupils' wellbeing and develops resilience. Roles such as wellbeing and sports ambassadors and prefects help pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to develop leadership, communication and teamwork skills. Leaders monitor participation

carefully so that pupils who may need additional encouragement receive the support they need to take part.

The school provides a rich range of opportunities that broaden pupils' interests and aspirations. Pupils take part in activities such as knitting and crochet clubs, spelling bee competitions and practical projects linked to the local community. They value experiences such as participating in charity events, environmental initiatives and experiencing cultural and religious diversity beyond their own faith, including a trip to a Cathedral and workshops with visitors from other faiths.

Pupils develop secure and detailed knowledge across the school's personal, social, health and economic education programme. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, personal safety and how to look after their physical and mental health. They demonstrate an impressive understanding of fundamental British values and the importance of equality. The relationships and sex education and health education programme is age-appropriate and carefully designed. Pupils develop a secure understanding of how to stay safe, both online and offline.

Pupils' wellbeing is prioritised. Staff know pupils extremely well and anticipate their needs. Pupils value the school's pastoral support, which helps them feel heard and well cared for.

Leaders provide consistently effective and impartial careers education and guidance that equips pupils with detailed knowledge to make well-informed decisions about their future career pathways. As a result, all pupils move on to secure and sustain education, apprenticeship or employment destinations that enable them to be successful.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

In the past two years, the curriculum has been substantially redesigned. Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that is carefully constructed, logically ordered and builds pupils' knowledge securely over time. Leaders monitor its impact meticulously. They take action promptly to bring about improvements when they are needed.

Leaders focus closely on teachers' professional learning to ensure that teaching is effective and that teachers know what to teach and how. Typically, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to explain new concepts clearly and to help pupils make connections to earlier learning. Teachers design effective tasks that help pupils to embed their understanding. Consistent routines and effective teaching strategies support pupils to understand increasingly complex ideas successfully.

Typically, teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and usually identify and address any misconceptions. However, this is not consistent across all subjects. Teachers sometimes do not revisit pupils' errors thoroughly enough. As a result, they do not reshape subsequent activities to address pupils' gaps in understanding as quickly as they could.

Teachers adapt their teaching well so that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access the curriculum. When needed, pupils receive timely support with reading, handwriting and mathematics. All pupils regularly read and discuss ambitious texts, reinforcing the school's culture of reading for enjoyment.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils flourish here. Each day, they experience a warm sense of belonging in this tight-knit and friendly school. Pupils describe the school as a place where they enjoy spending time with their friends and a place where they can be themselves. They form respectful, caring relationships with each other and the adults who work with them. This ensures that pupils feel safe and listened to.

Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum. They are highly committed to their learning and demonstrate very positive attitudes. Teachers know pupils really well and provide tailored support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to those who find learning more difficult. This reduces any barriers that these pupils may have. Pupils develop a deep body of knowledge across subjects that supports their high achievement.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Throughout their time here, pupils develop into polite, well-mannered and articulate young people. They attend school regularly and are actively engaged in lessons. Pupils learn without disruption. Positive relationships underpin everything that happens here. Classrooms are harmonious and purposeful. Bullying is rare and leaders deal with any incidents swiftly and effectively.

Beyond their academic studies, pupils benefit from a vibrant programme of clubs, trips and activities, including cultural, artistic and sporting opportunities. Pupils develop as active citizens in their local community, for example through litter-picking, fundraising for a local homelessness charity and performing traditional Islamic songs in a residential home. These experiences help them to develop confidence and engage positively with their community and beyond.

Next steps

- Leaders should make sure that teachers address misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge swiftly and consistently well across the curriculum.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

This school has a Muslim religious character.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school is located at one site at Willow Street, Little Harwood, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 5NQ.

The name of the proprietor is Masjid-E Sajedeen Islamiyah. The chair of the proprietor body is Ayub Patel.

The fees currently charged are £2270 to £2450.

The school's email address is info@ighs.org.uk

The previous regulatory compliance inspection of the school was conducted by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in November 2022, followed by a progress monitoring inspection in January 2024. All independent school standards were found to be met.

Since the previous inspection by Ofsted in July 2018, there have been many significant changes to leadership and governance, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher, governors and chair of the proprietor body. In this time, there has also been significant staffing changes.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and the designated safeguarding lead, during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority, the chair of the proprietor body and the chair of governors.

Mehnaz Kauser: Headteacher

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided	Standards met
All standards have been met.	
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:

Kate Bowker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Amina Modan, His Majesty's Inspector

Phillip Walmsley, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 12 May 2026

Total pupils

160

School capacity

270

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

6

Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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