



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Cardiff Muslim Primary School**

**Merthyr Street  
Cathays  
CF24 4JL**

**Date of inspection: June 2022**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

## About Cardiff Muslim Primary School

Name of provider	Cardiff Muslim Primary School
Proprietor	Chair of Trustees: Sajid Hussain
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent Primary
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	135
Pupils of statutory school age	135
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/06/2014
Start date of inspection	13/06/2022

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: [mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

## Overview

Cardiff Muslim Primary school is a happy family school that serves the local Islamic community successfully. Staff provide pupils with an extremely high level of care and support. They have a strong focus on developing pupils as respectful and responsible citizens and support their well-being effectively. As a result, pupils feel cared for and valued. Most are polite and well-behaved and have a positive attitude towards learning.

The school provides pupils with a range of stimulating learning experiences, enhanced by regular trips and visitors. Staff makes good use of their limited outdoor space to ensure that pupils have regular chances to learn outside. Most teachers plan interesting learning activities that meet the needs of most pupils. They provide pupils with beneficial feedback to help them know what they have done well and how they can improve. As a result, most pupils make strong progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. However, a minority of more able pupils do not always make the progress in lessons of which they are capable as teachers do not always ensure that activities challenge them. The school's support for pupils with additional needs is highly effective. This includes using a range of practical tools to help them with their learning.

The school's provision for personal and social education is a strength. There is an annual programme covering a wide range of relevant topics. This ensures that the school helps pupils have a strong understanding of important world issues and to reinforces Islamic values.

Pupils have regular opportunities to use their literary skills to support their learning. However, they do not always have the opportunity to use their numeracy skills at an appropriate level in other subjects. Pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in topic work with confidence. However, the school does not teach ICT skills systematically.

Leaders provide the school with strong strategic leadership. They are passionate about providing pupils with a good start in life. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop and have a good track record in making improvements. The school's trustees challenge and support leaders effectively. Leaders use their limited resources well to improve teaching and learning through a range of self-evaluation activities. Staff have access to regular and useful professional development opportunities to help address the school's priorities and for their own personal needs.

## **Compliance with the regulations for registration**

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

### **The quality of education provided by the school**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The suitability of proprietors and staff**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The provision of information**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure that teachers plan activities that challenge more able pupils to achieve as well as they can
- R2 Improve provision for the teaching of ICT skills
- R3 Increase opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in meaningful contexts at the same level as in their mathematics lessons

## **What happens next**

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to their practical support for pupils with additional learning needs for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Learning

Most pupils at the school come from homes where they speak English in addition to a wide range of other languages. A few pupils speak little English when they join the school. As they move through the school, most pupils make at least good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. However, a minority of more able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

Many younger pupils speak confidently to each other and to adults. Year 2 pupils describe how they are drawing and shading worms as part of their topic on minibeasts using appropriate language. Most older pupils have very strong speaking skills. They speak eloquently and confidently to each other and to adults. For example, Year 4 pupils share reviews of a favourite book with their class, asking relevant and searching questions maturely. Most pupils listen respectfully to each other and to their teachers' instructions.

From the time that they join the school, pupils improve their writing skills quickly. In reception, pupils begin to combine words to write short sentences, for example to describe a character from the story 'Shark in the Park'. By the end of Year 2, many pupils create short pieces of writing using punctuation correctly and spell common words accurately. Older pupils develop their writing skills well. They understand how to write for different purposes and audiences. For example, Year 4 pupils write interesting diary entries to describe their day on an Egyptian excavation trip and interesting poems about Cardiff. By Year 6, many pupils write confidently and at length. For example, pupils write letters to the Prime Minister to ask him to help refugees from Ukraine using effective persuasive language. More able pupils in particular use exciting vocabulary to add sparkle to their work. Many pupils use a range of punctuation correctly to demarcate their work and spell complex words accurately. Many older pupils have neat cursive handwriting.

In reception, most pupils learn phonics quickly. They use this knowledge well to help them build words and begin to read simple texts accurately. As they move through the school, most pupils make strong progress in improving their reading skills and enjoy reading a variety of reading material, including books written in Arabic. More able pupils read with great interest and use texts well to help them understand the meaning of unfamiliar words. Older pupils understand why different authors use a variety of language techniques to engage the reader. Most pupils use their literacy skills well to support their work in other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils write interesting fact files about Muslim scientists and inventors.

Most younger pupils develop their number skills well. For example, pupils in Year 1 count accurately in 10s and in Year 2 pupils accurately read scales by using their knowledge of weight. Many older pupils have secure mathematical skills. They use their skills well to help them solve problems. For example, Year 6 pupils calculate the area of irregular shapes correctly and use angles and percentages to draw accurate pie charts. In the majority of classes, pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately to support their learning in other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils choose how to present data on how people live around the world using tally charts, pictograms and

bar charts. However, in a minority of classes, pupils do not use their numeracy skills at an appropriate level to support their learning in other subjects well enough.

Pupils use different ICT skills confidently as they move through the school. They use ICT to support their learning in other subjects regularly. Younger pupils use tablet computers to draw pictures and to create pictograms on their favourite mini beasts. Year 4 pupils use ICT in mathematics lessons to draw rectangles with given perimeters. Pupils in Year 5 combine images and oral commentaries to make informative digital movies on the wonders of the world. However, they do not always improve the full range of ICT skills well enough.

Throughout the school, pupils have suitable creative skills. In reception, pupils create colourful pictures all a rainbow fish to help them remember the importance of friendship. Year 4 pupils produce colourful African masks as part of their topic on the world.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Pupils are proud to be part of the Cardiff Muslim Primary School 'family'. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and have a strong understanding of cultural diversity. They celebrate their own cultures and those of the wider community in an inclusive, welcoming environment.

Nearly all pupils know that they are valued by the staff and that everyone in the school cares about them. They feel safe and secure in school. Nearly all pupils are confident that there are a range of adults they can speak to who will promptly deal with any concerns that they may have. This contributes to the whole school community's strong sense of well-being.

The school council, head boy and head girl take great pride in their roles and understand how these positions develop their confidence, presenting and listening skills. They feel strongly that they are listened to by staff and can influence the work of the school positively. This includes the school introducing a residential trip for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, to access an opportunity that might otherwise not be available to all. In addition, in direct response to pupil feedback, the school has increased the amount of outdoor learning experiences and the range of creative activities within topics taught.

All pupils have opportunities to approach teachers and ask for support whether through the class 'worry box' or the 'Dua' (prayer) request box. Pupils value these opportunities to approach staff in a less direct way. They know that staff will address their concerns and consider their suggestions.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils have strong working relationships with staff, who they trust completely. Most pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school is good. They are motivated by the school's effective reward system. Most pupils settle quickly to tasks and have a positive attitudes towards their learning. On occasions, pupils are 'bursting' with enthusiasm to contribute to activities. All pupils are highly respectful of others' views. However, at times, for a very few pupils, their enthusiasm results in them not responding to the teacher or their peers as well as they could.

Pupils care about each other. At break and lunchtimes, it is notable that no pupil is left to play alone and that pupils co-operate and play well together across age groups. This builds upon their strong sense of community. Pupils understand the need to stay healthy and participate enthusiastically in opportunities for exercise throughout the week. Older pupils enjoy taking part in the 'daily mile'.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Across the school, nearly all members of staff have strong and positive relationships with pupils. Most teachers have well-established classroom routines that help pupils settle quickly at the start of lessons and to manage their behaviour successfully. Teachers provide pupils with a range of stimulating learning experiences that help to engage them to become enthusiastic learners. They have appropriate learning objectives for each lesson and ensure that pupils know what they need to do to succeed. They provide pupils with clear instructions and nearly all teachers use their voice well to enthuse and engage pupils. Many teachers use a variety of questions well to check pupils' understanding and to extend their learning further. They use stimulating resources to support their teaching. For example, in reception, staff use a frog puppet to help teach pupils phonics in an engaging way. In Year 6, pupils use electronic buzzers to compete against each other in mathematics lessons.

Nearly all teachers plan lessons appropriately based on pupils' prior learning and to meet the needs of most pupils. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not always ensure that their activities challenge more able pupils well enough. As a result, these pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. A minority of teachers provide pupils with too much scaffolding, and this limits their ability to organise their work independently and to write at length.

The school deploys the enthusiastic and capable support staff well to support individuals and groups of pupils, particularly with literacy, numeracy and well-being. This includes working with small groups of pupils to reinforce class work when they need additional help.

Most teachers provide pupils with useful feedback on their work. This helps pupils know what they have done well and how they can improve further. Staff give pupils regular opportunities to assess their own work by deciding which criteria they have met.

Teachers provide parents with informative end of year reports. They include information on how well each pupil is progressing with their social and learning skills, an overview of the pupil's achievements and individual targets for improvement.

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and meets the requirement for the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. There is a strong emphasis on promoting Islamic values and morals through a well thought out framework for each subject and area of learning to teach skills progressively. Teachers supplement learning in the classroom by arranging a wide range of



interesting trips to places of interest and invite visitors to the school regularly. For example, younger pupils visited Cardiff Bay to support their topic on pirates and older pupils met local author Hamed Amiri to help inspire them to become writers.

Teachers plan to teach pupils' literacy, including Arabic, and numeracy skills progressively. There is an appropriate whole school focus on improving pupils' reading skills and this includes regular reading sessions for all pupils to encourage them to read for pleasure. Teachers provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to use their literacy skills in a range of meaningful contexts. For example, older pupils write well-structured explanations of their science experiments. However, a minority of staff do not always provide pupils with the chance to use their numeracy skills in different subject areas and at the same level as in their mathematics work. Although staff ensure that pupils use ICT to support their learning in different subject areas, the school's provision to systematically teach a wide range of ICT skills is not as well developed.

The school has a highly effective programme for teaching pupils' personal and social education. There are half termly topics, and each week has a particular theme. These include cleaner air, first aid and safer internet weeks. Leaders revise the themes each year in response to feedback from staff and requests from pupils. Through the implementation of this programme, staff help pupils to develop as healthy, safe individuals with a strong sense of responsibility and respect.

In all classes, staff use their outdoor spaces to support pupils' learning well. They ensure that pupils have regular access to the outdoors for independent and adult led learning, including to develop their physical skills.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The well-being of every member of the school community is a priority for school leaders. Staff know all pupils extremely well and provide highly effective support for their welfare. This is a strength of the school.

The school utilises the local and wider community successfully to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. There are numerous examples of members of the community making informative visits to the school. A visit from local faith leaders in 'Inter-Faith week', allows pupils the opportunity to consider the similarities between different religions and cultures. The local police officer visits the school regularly to promote important issues such as encouraging pupils to consider, 'right and wrong' and the importance of online safety.

The school encourages all pupils to give 'zakat' (charitable giving). Through their annual 'charity week', the school donates to both an international and a local charity as well as contributing to the needs of the school. In addition, the school supports a local foodbank. This gives pupils the sense of the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves and reinforces Islamic values.

Provision for the few pupils identified across the school as having additional learning needs (ALN) is a strength. As a result, these pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Pupils' learning needs are identified by their parents or school staff, and they are then assessed promptly by the additional learning needs co-ordinator

(ALNCo). The ALNCo ensures that beneficial school-based interventions are put into place promptly, so that pupils can continue to progress in their learning. These bespoke interventions may take the form of in class support, withdrawal in small groups or one-to-one support. For example, the school identified the need to support the reading skills of a few pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 after periods when the school was closed due to the pandemic. Effective interventions ensured all pupils have made strong progress in improving their reading skills.

The ALNCo has introduced imaginative and useful ways to encourage pupils to become more independent in their learning and understand how they learn. Pupils with ALN construct 'Look Books', which a pupil constructs themselves and contains learning aids such as multiplication tables, words they frequently mis spell and memory aids. Pupils remove items once they are no longer needed and replace them with new learning aids. This helps them take responsibility for their own learning well. In literacy lessons pupils with ALN use a colour coded writing framework, which helps them to understand how to structure their work.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. The arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirements and give no cause for concern. All staff understand that it is their role to safeguard pupils in their school. They receive training in safeguarding at the beginning of each academic year and have access to regular refresher training. In addition, trustees have undertaken a range of safeguarding training appropriate to their role. The safeguarding lead teachers handle any concerns promptly, including making referrals to external agencies when necessary. The school has thorough safer recruitment policies and provides a safe environment for its pupils.

Staff provide older pupils with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills by being a member of the school council or planning and leading whole school events. Members of the school council confidently delivered a presentation to the chair of the British Muslim Council about their school. Across the school, staff ensure that nearly all pupils have the opportunity to influence what and how they learn regularly, and this supports pupils' strong engagement with learning activities.

The school has limited access to outside areas and sports facilities, however it makes effective use of local open spaces and sports' facilities. The school educates pupils about the importance of a healthy body through, for example, workshops on diabetes and the human body and teaching pupils how to use a defibrillator.

## **Leadership and management**

The school is led by an effective pairing of an experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher. At the time of inspection, the headteacher is employed by the school for two days each week, and at all other times the deputy headteacher assumes full responsibility for leading the school. Together, they know the school community extremely well. Staff and parents respect them and appreciate that they are visible and accessible.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which permeates throughout the school's work. Leaders have high ambitions for their pupils and high expectations of their staff. They support the well-being of all members of the school community and promote Islamic morals and values successfully through the school's nurturing family

feeling and strong safeguarding culture. Leaders are empathetic and supportive of staff, particularly during the current pandemic.

The headteacher and deputy head teacher have clearly agreed responsibilities, outlined in their job descriptions appropriately. For example, the deputy headteacher provides strong leadership on the development of the school curriculum and is the school's designated safeguarding person (DSP).

There is a coherent annual process of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. All members of the school community actively contribute towards this work. Leaders analyse a range of data, including parent and pupil questionnaires, hold regular conversations with pupils, scrutinise pupils' work and undertake regular lesson observations. Through this work, leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and shortcomings across the school.

Leaders use the information from their self-evaluation activities well to agree school priorities for improvement. They have a good track record of improvement and have successfully addressed all recommendations from the last inspection. However, their success criteria and expected outcomes are not always clear enough to enable leaders to judge their progress against their targets accurately.

Leaders empower staff to improve. Since his appointment, the headteacher has developed a more robust system for performance management of teachers which includes the use of lesson observations to help evaluate the quality of teaching. This new approach is beginning to enable leaders to evaluate the impact of teaching on improving pupils' outcomes. Where leaders have identified any underperformance, they have dealt with this in a sensitive and supportive manner.

The school provides regular and worthwhile professional development opportunities for all staff. These align well with the improvement priorities of the school and individual members of staff areas for improvement. Staff benefit from opportunities to direct their own personal development via several online learning platforms and have an annually allocated budget to spend on courses of their choosing. Staff enthusiastically embrace these training opportunities. They maintain detailed records which they actively reference as needed to support their work. Teachers also use personal feedback from lesson observations and work scrutiny to help them self-reflect upon their own performance over time.

The school benefits from its membership of the various national organisations. This includes participation at national conferences, access to online training and high-quality curriculum materials, and the exchange of good practice. Furthermore, the school has a strong partnership with a local Christian primary school. Through beneficial exchange visits, the two schools actively support one another's development.

The school's trustees contribute purposefully to developing the school's strategic priorities. They apply their broad range of expertise to offer appropriate challenge and support to leaders. The trustees and headteacher also work together effectively to ensure prudent management of the school's budget. They set out clear priorities for spending and balance these suitably with the school's short-term needs and long-term aspirations. All trustees have undertaken the statutory safeguarding training, but

in many cases have undertaken additional specialist training. As a result, trustees fully understand the safeguarding arrangements of the school and their role in quality assuring this work. They approach governance objectively and robustly scrutinise the school's performance, including a detailed annual evaluation of the performance of senior leaders and appropriate reviews of school policies.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and support staff through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body (where appropriate), information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([Estyn Website](#))

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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