



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

**A report on**

**Ummul Mumineen Academy**

**Date of inspection: October 2024**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**

**and Training in Wales**

## About Ummul Mumineen Academy

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| Name of provider                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Ummul Mumineen Academy     |
| Proprietor status                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Community Interest Company |
| Language of the provider                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | English                    |
| Type of school                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Independent all age        |
| Residential provision?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No                         |
| Number of pupils on roll                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 103                        |
| Pupils of statutory school age                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 103                        |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                            |
| Start date of inspection                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 9 October 2024             |
| <p>School context:</p> <p>Ummul Mumineen Academy is an independent day school educating girls from the age of 6 to 16 years, situated in the centre of Cardiff. The school opened in 2016 and is registered as a Community Interest Company.</p> <p>There are currently 103 pupils on roll, with the school having more than doubled in size since the last inspection. There are 39 pupils in the primary phase and 64 pupils in the secondary phase. Pupils are mostly from the local area in Cardiff but a very few travel from Swansea.</p> <p>In the primary phase there are four classes, discrete Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 classes and a joint Year 5 and Year 6 class. In the secondary phase there are discrete Year 7, Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 classes.</p> <p>Almost all pupils come from minority ethnic groups including Arab, Pakistani, Somali and West Indian. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language.</p> <p>The school is non-selective, and entry is based upon the school's ability to meet the needs of the pupil. It provides an education with a Muslim ethos and a curriculum that includes the teaching of Arabic and the Quraan. The school's motto is 'Learn, Enhance, Achieve'.</p> <p>The headteacher has been in post since the school opened in 2016.</p> <p>The school was last inspected in November 2019, and this is the school's first monitoring inspection.</p> |                            |

## Summary

Senior leaders at Ummul Mumineen Academy demonstrate strong strategic leadership and resilience. They have effectively managed the school's growth and move to a new site, while maintaining a calm, nurturing learning environment.

The broad curriculum includes Arabic and Quraan studies and promotes inclusivity and mutual respect. Teaching generally fosters good progress, although on occasions activities are not adapted well enough to the range of abilities in a class.

Pupils across the school engage strongly in their learning and demonstrate strong thinking skills. Well-being is prioritised across the school, through personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and a highly supportive school community.

Leaders ensure staff receive comprehensive support for their induction and professional development. Robust safeguarding measures are in place to protect pupils.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

## 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 2024.

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**

On this visit, Estyn did not inspect 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**

We have made 2 recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Further develop the use of assessment outcomes to inform teaching and maximise pupil progress
- R2 Strengthen quality assurance processes to identify areas of strength in teaching and provide opportunities for staff to learn from best practice

## **What happens next**

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

## **Main evaluation**

Senior leaders have strong strategic leadership and show resilience. Since the last inspection the school has doubled in size and expanded into two buildings, before moving into the current new school site in April 2024. Despite these changes leaders have ensured the school has maintained a calm, nurturing learning environment of mutual respect where pupils feel safe and secure. This strength in leadership has ensured the future of the school and contributes to the high regard in which it is held by the community it serves.

The school offers a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. All pupils study Arabic and the Quraan which reflects the Islamic context of the school and supports pupils well on their faith journey. In addition, the school actively promotes mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This underpins the inclusive ethos and culture of the school.

Teaching at the school enables many pupils to make good progress. Teachers foster purposeful and productive working relationships with pupils, which are underpinned by mutual respect and well-established classroom routines. In the most effective lessons teachers have a good understanding of the aptitudes and needs of the pupils. They adapt the activities to their pupils and provide timely feedback and support to move learning on. In addition, learning resources are used effectively and

are of a good quality, quantity and range. Where teaching is less effective, teachers rely too heavily on published schemes and do not always adapt learning activities to the range of abilities the pupils in their class. This can mean that pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the school's framework for evaluating their work. Pupils understand their current working level and what is expected of them to make progress. Verbal feedback is a strength across the school, while the quality of written feedback is a strength in the junior section of the school, but more variable in the senior school. Teachers and leaders do not always make effective use of assessment information in the senior school to monitor pupil progress effectively and ensure they maximise pupil outcomes.

Pupils at the school listen carefully to teachers and their peers. They are keen to talk to visitors and explain what they are learning. A few older pupils offer well-developed oral responses in lessons and explain and justify their opinions. Many pupils develop their thinking skills well, particularly when responding to teachers' questioning. They respond positively to challenge and enjoy opportunities to extend their thinking and work independently. For example, in Year 8 science pupils apply their knowledge of photosynthesis when thinking about the optimum conditions for plants and leaves.

Staff have a high regard for pupil well-being, and this is promoted both within the formal curriculum and informally through the reward system. PSHE lessons support pupils effectively in understanding important transition points in their life and allows them time to reflect on their emotional well-being. The school encourages pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to their school community and wider society. Pupils describe the school as an inclusive community where they are 'heard and seen' and their opinions are valued.

Leaders place high importance on the well-being of their staff. This is shown by the strong support offered when staff join the school to ensure they understand processes and systems and the expectations leaders have. Leaders have produced a very useful 'teacher toolkit' to support staff. This is a strength of the school. There is a strong focus on professional learning and staff are expected to evaluate their performance regularly and identify areas for development. Leaders then support staff to access relevant training. However, leaders' quality assurance processes do not always identify and record these strengths and areas for development in teaching in a formal way.

The school has robust safer recruitment and safeguarding processes. All staff complete training regularly and understand their role in safeguarding the pupils in their care.

## **Progress in addressing recommendations from previous inspection**

### **R1. Develop the role of the committee of advisors as a critical friend to the school**

Since the core inspection, the proprietor has sought to develop the role of a committee of advisors as critical friends and has made reasonable progress in doing this. A committee of four volunteers has been established who have backgrounds in education and business. The committee meet regularly with senior leaders and action points from the meetings are minuted.

The committee offers both support and challenge to the school leadership. They have supported the school in finding and relocating to a larger more appropriate building. In addition, they offer advice on teacher recruitment and the upskilling and support for existing staff. The committee also offers business advice with their most recent recommendation being for the school to become a charity.

### **R2. Share the existing good practice in written feedback to support pupils' independent learning further**

In response to this recommendation the deputy headteacher delivered a workshop on assessment for learning to all staff. During this workshop leaders shared their expectations with regard to lesson planning, feedback, differentiation and formative and summative assessment. More recently good practice has been shared through inhouse meetings.

Leaders have developed a detailed staff induction programme and a 'teacher toolkit' to support teachers and make expectations clear. Whilst good practice was seen during the inspection, the use of effective written feedback to move learning on is still inconsistent across the school.

## 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

## Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

|               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| nearly all =  | with very few exceptions |
| most =        | 90% or more              |
| many =        | 70% or more              |
| a majority =  | over 60%                 |
| half =        | 50%                      |
| around half = | close to 50%             |
| a minority =  | below 40%                |
| few =         | below 20%                |
| very few =    | less than 10%            |



## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

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 (Wales) Regulations 2024. 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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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