

Bahr Academy

72 Sceptre Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6PR

Inspection dates

29 April 2014

Reason for inspection

This unannounced emergency inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the registration authority, the Department for Education (DFE), after receiving a complaint about the school.

The Department for Education asked Her Majesty's Inspectors to consider whether the school is compliant with the regulatory requirements in relation to Standard 1 - the quality of education, including the curriculum, teaching, planning, assessment, pupil progress, resources and managing behaviour, Standard 2 - spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and Standard 3 - arrangements to promote the welfare, health and safety, including promoting good behaviour, Standard 5 - premises and Standard 7 - the complaints procedure.

Conclusions

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors toured the school during lessons, at break time and at lunchtime. Four Islamic studies lessons were observed formally and students' exercise books were scrutinised from a range of secular subjects, including science, English and personal, social and health education. Informal discussions were held with students during their lessons and at break times. Discussions were held with the headteacher and the head of school. Discussions were held with students in each of the four class groups without staff present and all seven students in the top class had one-to-one discussions with a female inspector. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's single central register, staff files, behaviour policies and pupil records.

All but three of the regulations for independent schools were found to be met.

In terms of sufficiency of teachers, records and discussions with students indicate that the 12 staff employed to teach at the school are deployed in a suitable way. Records indicate that the staff have suitable training and qualifications to teach their subjects. For example, all of the Islamic studies teachers have qualifications from Islamic schools or United Kingdom universities. However, although some staff hold qualified teacher status, this is not made clear on the school's website. Instead it states that all staff are 'fully qualified' and does not provide the required summary of staff qualifications.

Students are taught Islamic studies each morning by a suitable number of adults. Each of the four classes benefit from small class sizes and students say they value the help and support provided by their teachers. The secular curriculum is taught each afternoon by a largely different group of staff, some of whom only visit the school to deliver lessons in

their subjects. A review of the timetable indicates that although Islamic studies takes up more than half of the school day, the curriculum is suitably broad and covers all of the required areas of learning. The timetable includes mathematics lessons for different groups of students after the end of the school day. Thus, each student has a long day that includes additional mathematics lessons after school on one day each week. Students state that they have no concerns about the length of the school day as this approach helps them with their learning and examination preparation. However, although not breaching any regulations, the senior staff agreed to look again at the length of the school day and understood that this might appear excessive.

Staff state that there have been some opportunities for an external speaker and careers adviser to talk to students about career opportunities and they assert that some students were able to undertake work experience at a local madrasa. However, on the day of the inspection they were not able to demonstrate that these arrangements constituted a systematic approach to providing careers guidance for all students. Although all seven Year 11 students in 2013 secured GCSEs at grades C to A* in English and mathematics only one is believed to have moved on to education, training or employment.

Relationships between staff and students were observed to be very positive. Students stated that they feel safe and are not bullied. They state that they feel confident to go to any member of staff with any concerns, knowing they will listen and take action. Students say they value their teachers because they help them learn, ensure they understand, challenge them and have high expectations. They describe their teachers as very supportive and approachable. Students state that behaviour is managed appropriately and fairly. They state that they have never been threatened or seen others threatened. A recent change has been the introduction of Saturday morning detentions, which are used as a punishment for misdemeanours and for not completing homework. Students state that detentions are fair and say they get warnings prior to being given detention. Students state they have no concerns about homework and feel that the quantity of homework is appropriate.

Staff consider it to be part of their civic and religious duty for all students and staff to help to take care of the school environment; to this end there is a rota of duties identifying tasks for each student to undertake daily, such as tidying books and classrooms. One such task is to check on the state of the students' toilets and inform staff if fresh toilet tissue is needed or if the toilet needs to be cleaned. Students are not expected to clean the toilets and do not use any of the cleaning chemicals. Students state they are happy to undertake these tasks and were consulted about the rota. They help to maintain a clean school environment by occasionally hoovering, tidying shelves, stacking benches and setting out tables, all of which students consider to be fair and acceptable.

The daily attendance registers meet requirements although they comprise separate morning and afternoon registers. However, the school was not able to present either an electronic or hard copy of the admission register. The admission register was said to be kept electronically but senior staff indicated that a hard copy has not been made on an annual basis which would be needed for this to meet requirements. Although senior staff have negotiated use of an outdoor space at the youth club located next to the school this space is not routinely used by students. Similarly, the nearby public park is underused. Consequently, although the school meets regulatory requirements for providing outdoor space, students spend the vast majority of their time within the small number of rooms on the school premises. There are limited opportunities for students to get fresh air and

exercise and to be sociable with their friends and classmates outdoors. On the day of the inspection the school site was in a reasonable state of repair. There are advanced plans to relocate the school to a larger more extensive site. Senior staff are optimistic that the new site and greater amount of space will allow the school to provide both better facilities and enhance the curriculum offer to students.

The published complaints policy meets requirements. There is evidence of one complaint being received under the informal stage of the policy during the last 12 months. This was received verbally and recorded in writing on a school proforma. The records demonstrate that the school listens to parental concerns and takes appropriate action.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school requires improvement and must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), and associated requirements

Ensure that provision is made for appropriate careers guidance for all students.	2(2)(g)
Ensure there is an admission register which is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006? ¹ .	17
Ensure that the school provides parents, carers or others with a summary of the number of staff employed, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications.	24(1)(b)

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made.

Inspection team

Amraz Ali, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rachael Flesher

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Bahr Academy is an independent Muslim girls' day school based in the Elswick area of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is owned by the Bahr Academy Trust.
- The school is currently registered for up to 30 female students aged from 11 to 16 years and there are 30 students on roll. No students have a statement of special educational needs or are learning English as an additional language.
- All students are British from a South Asian heritage.
- The school was last inspected in September 2011 when the quality of education was judged to be good and pupils' welfare, health and safety were judged to be good; all regulations for independent schools were met.

School details

Unique reference number	136258
Inspection number	445749
DfE registration number	391/6040
This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Muslim girls day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	0
Proprietor	Mr Muhammad Abdulmuheet
Chair	Mr Muhammad Abdulmuheet
Headteacher	Mr Muhammad Abdulmuheet
Date of previous school inspection	27-28 September 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,200
Telephone number	01912 731907
Email address	info@bahracademy.co.uk

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