

Al-Mahad-Al-Islami School

1 Industry Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S9 5FP

Inspection dates

27–29 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Satisfactory

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietor and headteacher have not ensured that the school complies with all the independent school standards.
- Governance is weak. The shura (the committee with governance responsibility) do not provide the headteacher with sufficient challenge to carry out her job effectively. They have a limited understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Pupils' attendance is not improving. Leaders do not track attendance meticulously and do not do enough to encourage good attendance. They do not record the precise destination of leavers.
- Leaders do not do enough to help teachers improve. Staff training is not always effective.
- Most teachers do not ensure that the least and most able pupils are sufficiently supported or challenged.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Teachers' assessments lack accuracy.
- The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress lack rigour. Leaders do not gather enough information about pupils' progress.
- Pupils' targets are not challenging enough in most subjects. Therefore, teachers do not have high enough expectations for pupils, in some subjects and year groups.
- Pupils' achievement varies between subjects and year groups. Overall, GCSE results are lower than in other schools nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a strength of the school. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Staff, parents and carers are supportive of the school.
- Pupils' literacy has improved as a result of an increased emphasis on reading and additional literacy support.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and well resourced.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - ensuring that the headteacher is given more strategic direction and sufficient time to carry out her leadership role effectively
 - developing a more rigorous understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the priorities for school improvement
 - ensuring that the requirements of the independent school standards are consistently met.
- Improve teaching, so that all pupils make consistently good progress, across year groups and subjects, especially in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that staff training and performance management has a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching
 - providing greater challenge for the most able pupils, and support for the least able pupils
 - further developing the schools' assessment systems, so that teachers set challenging targets, assess accurately and use this information to plan learning.
- Further improve pupils' attendance by ensuring that all short-absences are monitored more carefully, and action is taken to ensure that all pupils attend regularly.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Part 1: Quality of education provided. The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3(a))
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (paragraph 3(c))
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3(d))
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3(g)).
- Part 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils. The proprietor must ensure that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15).
- Part 8: Quality of leadership and management. The proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the

independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(a))

- fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has sole responsibility for driving school improvement. The shura do not provide any strategic direction. The school improvement plan lacks rigour, and is not a shared endeavour. As a result, leaders and managers have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met consistently.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching, using a variety of suitable methods. However, teachers do not have a good understanding of how to improve the quality of their teaching. There are no formal performance management systems in place. Training for teachers varies in effectiveness. As a result, the quality of teaching in the school is variable.
- The school maintains a suitable admission register with all the relevant column headings. Although leaders inform the local authority when a girl leaves the school, they do not record the specific name of the school, or destination, on the register.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed. Pupils have numerous opportunities, through assemblies and a citizenship course, to explore life in modern Britain. Pupils were effusive about a recent enterprise week, which involved representatives from local businesses.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils spend the majority of their time studying national curriculum subjects, which are well resourced. They value their Islamic studies lessons, which complement their other studies.
- Pupils have numerous opportunities to learn outside the classroom. They develop their creative and aesthetic skills through a range of subjects and after-school clubs. They have opportunities to undertake visits, for example to the local science centre.
- Parents and staff are supportive of the school. Parents, who made their views known to inspectors, value the regular verbal updates and written reports which they receive from the school. They describe how this contact has helped to improve their daughters' behaviour and progress.
- Pupils have access to impartial careers inspiration and guidance. They learn about different careers in their citizenship lessons and benefit from a range of external speakers. All Year 11 undertake work experience, including at a local dentist. All pupils proceed onto suitable post-16 destinations, including apprenticeships.

Governance

- The shura demonstrates a strong commitment to equalities and ensuring that the girls are well prepared to become confident British citizens. They work proactively to ensure that safeguarding is effective and that they meet their statutory 'Prevent' duty. They are aware of the potential risks of girls taking extended holidays.
- However, while the shura is supportive of the headteacher, they do not provide her with sufficient strategic direction. Their minutes of meetings consist of sensible requests from the headteacher, but demonstrate no evidence of challenge from the shura. They have

limited impact on driving school improvement. In particular, they:

- are unclear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school
- do not know key information about pupils' attainment and attendance
- are unaware of the school improvement plan
- are not sufficiently familiar with the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. An appropriate safeguarding policy is in place, and, in the absence of a website, is available to parents on request.
- The site is safe and secure. All appropriate checks, such as fire risk assessments, are in place. The girls say that they feel safe and staff agree.
- All staff have received appropriate and regular child protection training. School leaders have sought relevant support from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Both staff and pupils are alert to a range of issues, such as child sexual exploitation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Leaders have successfully embedded a culture of safeguarding.
- The procedures for recruitment are robust and follow the school's policy for safer recruitment. The single central record contains all the relevant pre-employment checks on staff. Leaders responded quickly to rectify a couple of administrative errors on the record, and in recruitment files, identified at the beginning of the inspection.
- The headteacher works effectively with external agencies on the rare occasions where it is needed. She follows up concerns swiftly and documents evidence of all relevant conversations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across subjects and year groups. This is reflected in the progress that pupils make over time, as demonstrated in their books. Teaching is strongest in science and citizenship at key stage 4; teaching is weaker in mathematics across the school. As a result, pupils' achievement is inconsistent.
- Teachers are not routinely considering pupils' starting points when planning learning. All pupils, despite their ability, are often tackling the same work. Least-able pupils say that they find the work difficult, because it is sometimes too hard for them. Consequently, the least able pupils are not well supported and the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
- Teachers' assessments are not always accurate. There are no systems in place to check their accuracy. In addition, pupils' targets are not challenging enough. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of. As a result, some pupils make less progress than they could.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Some, but not all, teachers use their knowledge to help pupils develop their thinking. For example, in English, the teacher used questioning effectively to help pupils analyse semantic fields.
- The headteacher has sensibly prioritised the development of pupils' reading. Pupils have

regular opportunities to read both privately and out loud. Teachers emphasise key words and regularly correct spelling errors. Selected pupils are well supported in additional literacy lessons and extra-curricular clubs. These actions are serving to drive improvements in pupils' literacy.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Their books are well presented. They regularly complete the homework set.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and their emotional health is well supported. Pupils are alert to the potential dangers of internet use. As a result, pupils who inspectors spoke with say that they feel safe.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge of public services and the legal system. There is an elected school council, which has brought about change in the school. For example, the council were successful in acquiring more fans in classrooms.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of British values. They demonstrate tolerance of people's differences. They have a secure appreciation of other people's religions and cultures. They do not display any discrimination against disability or same-sex relationships.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and school records confirm this. They say that offensive comments, including inappropriate use of the word 'gay', never happen. Pupils are confident that if they report an incident of bullying, it will be addressed urgently and successfully.
- Pupils in some lessons are not given the opportunity to become confident, self-assured learners. This is particularly the case where teaching is weaker.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance, although in line with the average figures, is not improving over time. A few girls are regularly absent because they have taken extended trips abroad, with the prior knowledge of the school. However, leaders do not do enough to discourage this. In addition, leaders do not rigorously track the sporadic absences of some pupils, who are also more regularly absent. Inspectors found that some pupils with more absence are making less progress than their peers.
- School leaders insist on high standards of behaviour. School leaders have excluded some pupils, including permanently, since the last inspection. Inspectors confirm that the decisions to exclude were proportionate and well documented.
- Pupils conduct themselves well, around school and at breaktime. They are highly respectful to their teachers.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- School leaders are unable to demonstrate the overall progress that pupils make. Pupils are assessed appropriately when they start at the school, but this information is not used effectively to demonstrate pupils' progress over time. As a result, pupils' targets are reliant on the end-of-year assessment, and therefore lack challenge.
- Pupils' success at GCSE improved in 2016, but remains below the standards achieved in most schools. Nearly half of the pupils achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. Leaders predict that GCSE results will be similar in 2017. Evidence from pupils' current work suggests that they are making accelerated progress in English and science, and comparatively less progress in mathematics.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment in science, information communication technology and religious studies was strong, with all pupils achieving a grade C or above in these subjects. Pupils achieved less well in GCSE Arabic.
- The most able and least able pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of. Middle-ability pupils make the most progress. This is partly due to teachers' lack of consideration of their starting points.
- Pupils have a variety of opportunities to explore their future careers. They have suitable access to independent, impartial advice. Pupils benefit from a planned programme of work experience in Year 10. As a result, all pupils proceed to suitable destinations at the end of Year 11, including some apprenticeships.

School details

Unique reference number	131122
DfE registration number	373/6028
Inspection number	10033916

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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mohammed Hayat Khan
Chair	Mohammed Hayat Khan
Headteacher	Mrs Juwairiah Khan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,350
Telephone number	0114 2431224
Website	No website
Email address	enquires@almahadalislami.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–20 November 2014

Information about this school

- Al-Mahad-Al-Islami School opened in 1996. It is located in the Darnall area of Sheffield. The school is a Muslim girls school for up to 77 pupils aged from 11 to 17 years.
- There are no pupils on roll who have a disability, a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care plan. No pupils are identified as speaking English as an additional language. School leaders do not identify disadvantaged pupils.
- The school aims to provide girls with an education that enables them to become confident, active citizens of the community and wider society.

- The school operates on one site and does not use alternative education provision.
- The school was last inspected by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate in November 2014. Overall effectiveness was satisfactory.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out over two days, with half a day for on-site preparation. The school was closed to pupils on the first full day of the inspection.
- The lead inspector toured the premises and the outside area to ensure that the relevant independent standards were met.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons across subjects and year groups. They also considered pupils' work in books, in a wide range of subjects. An inspector listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher about safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, pupils' outcomes, the curriculum and the quality of teaching. The lead inspector met with the proprietor and a member of the shura committee, which has responsibility for governance.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils. They also spoke with pupils informally in lessons and around school.
- The lead inspector spoke with parents before school commenced. Inspectors also considered 11 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documents, including policies, behaviour records, the single central record, curriculum documents, recruitment records, training records and the school's risk assessments.
- The lead inspector checked the school's prospectus to confirm that the required policies and documents are available to parents on request, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Julia Wright, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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