

Inspection of Al-Mahad Al-Islami

1 Industry Road, Darnall, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S9 5FP

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 October 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The atmosphere at Al-Mahad Al-Islami School is vibrant and positive. The Islamic ethos of the school underpins the teaching of pupils and helps to create the respectful atmosphere that permeates the school. Pupils feel valued and the school is calm and welcoming. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are incredibly positive. A spirit of togetherness is evident throughout.

Pupils' attitudes in lessons are exemplary. Teachers expect them to rise to the challenges laid before them, and they do. Pupils are taught to be independent and resilient. This approach has a positive impact on helping pupils to feel confident that they can be successful. Pupils' aspirations are incredibly high.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by knowledgeable staff.

All pupils are involved in the life of the school and are encouraged to be active participants in the wider community. This ranges from charity work in the local area, fundraising as part of national initiatives and chances to design and run their own extra-curricular clubs. The small size of the school means pupils get to know each other well. Older pupils support and mentor younger pupils, which helps to create a strong sense of community among the pupils.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils do very well at this school. This is because the curriculum has developed considerably in recent years across many subjects. The provision for pupils with SEND, in particular, has strengthened. Important information about pupils is shared effectively with staff, and this ensures that all pupils can access the planned curriculum successfully.

Subject leaders have made clear the important information that they want pupils to learn, and this is also shared with teachers. Common curriculum aims and goals are therefore understood. In English, for example, work on Shakespeare's life and times for younger pupils develops to help pupils understand context, genre and presentation of character as pupils move through the school.

Teachers mostly make careful checks on what pupils are learning and ensure that important knowledge is understood by pupils. However, teachers do not consistently use the emerging information to address any gaps so as to ensure that pupils are ready to move on to learning new knowledge. In a small number of subjects, assessment processes are not clear to teachers.

Pupils enjoy reading. They are encouraged to read widely and many pupils enjoy speaking about the books they are reading in class and at home. There is high ambition in the texts that teachers use to encourage pupils to read. Should it be

necessary, the school has trained staff to implement a phonics programme for any pupils who might join the school at the early stages of reading.

The school is a safe place. Pupils feel able to speak to staff should they have any concerns. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other, and they are not concerned about bullying. The focus throughout the school is on supporting each person to be the best that they can be. Attendance at the school is very high and improving. The school has recently strengthened staffing in this area, and the rewards around attendance, such as school trips and vouchers for local shopping centres, are highly valued by pupils.

The school is keen to ensure that pupils are ready for their next steps in life. The aim is to help pupils become confident young women. This is the focus of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and the enrichment activities planned by the school. For example, the careers programme ensures that there are trips to local universities and work experience opportunities for every pupil. Preparation for transition to local colleges and sixth-form providers starts early in order to support pupils to be well-prepared for this. Pupils are taught to be confident in themselves so they are ready to achieve success. The high ambition of pupils and their desire to be the very best they can be shows that this work is having a positive benefit for pupils.

The proprietor and leaders of the school have a clear vision for the education of the pupils who attend the school. This is shared and understood by all staff and helps to support the positive atmosphere evident across the school. A recent recognition that leadership needed to be shared among more staff has led to the pastoral and SEND teams being strengthened. School leaders seek external support, for example related to subject curriculums. Leaders act on advice they receive but do not always ensure that visits from external advisers have a specific, defined focus aimed at improving a particular aspect of the school. This means that the impact of these visits on the experience of pupils takes more time to realise than it should.

There is a sound understanding of the independent school standards among leaders of the school, which ensures that these standards are met consistently. Recruitment processes are rigorous and the proprietor maintains regular checks on the suitability of the building for pupils. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They are incredibly positive about the ways in which the proprietor and leaders take account of their well-being and workload. Expectations on staff are clear. Staff aim to meet these expectations as they are proud of the work they do and their achievements in supporting pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school does not have a clear enough focus on ensuring that classroom approaches to assessment are clear in some subjects. This means there are inconsistent approaches in how teachers check that pupils are remembering important learning. Sometimes, teachers move to learning new knowledge before previous learning is fully embedded. Leaders should ensure that they develop consistent approaches to assessment across all subjects.
- Strategic approaches to school improvement are not planned rigorously. Some improvements, therefore, take longer to realise than is necessary. Leaders should ensure that they have a strategic and focused approach to their school improvement work.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	131122
DfE registration number	373/6028
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10321495
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Proprietor	Mohammed Hayat Khan
Headteacher	Juwairiah Khan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,100
Telephone number	0114 243 1224
Website	www.almahadalislami.co.uk
Email address	jkhan@almahadalislami.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 to 16 June 2022

Information about this school

- Al-Mahad Al-Islami is an independent day school for secondary-age girls. The school has an Islamic ethos.
- Although registered to take pupils up to the age of 17, at the time of the inspection, no pupils of sixth-form age were attending the school.
- The school does not use alternative provisions of education.
- The school's last standard inspection was from 14 to 16 June 2022.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and proprietor of the school, as well as leaders for attendance, safeguarding and the curriculum.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors also conducted a tour of the premises, scrutinised plans in the wider curriculum and visited during social times. Inspectors also looked at the school's approach to recording attendance and admissions and looked at records relating to the safety of the school site.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Matthew Vellensworth, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tricia Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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