

# Al-Furqan Community College

Independent school inspection report

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DCSF registration number	330/6084
Unique Reference Number (URN)	103592
Inspection number	353839
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the college

Al-Furqan Community College is an independent secondary day school for Muslim girls aged between 11 and 16 years. It is located in the Birmingham area of Tyseley and serves a multicultural community. The college first began in 1992 as an extension of the expanding Al-Furqan Primary School. It became separate provision in 1996, under the management of Al-Furqan Educational Trust that also runs a nursery, a voluntary aided primary school and a boys' secondary school. There are currently 128 girls on roll, most of whom have English as an additional language (EAL). Two students have a statement of special educational needs. The college was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2005. It aims to 'provide a happy and secure Islamic environment in which every student can discover and realise their full potential'.

## Evaluation of the college

Al-Furqan Community College provides an outstanding quality of education and successfully meets its aims. Parents, carers and students express a high level of satisfaction with the college's work, justifiably praising the senior leaders for their relentless focus on continuous improvement to ensure that all students achieve their best. Students make outstanding progress and achieve very highly, because they are exceptionally well served by an outstanding curriculum, outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and good teaching and assessment. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to contribute to their community, and their behaviour and attitudes to work are outstanding. Robust safeguarding procedures and excellent pastoral care contribute to the outstanding provision for their welfare, health and safety. The college complies with all of the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The quality of education is outstanding, underpinned by an outstanding curriculum that is broad, balanced, innovative, flexible and regularly reviewed, and so serves all

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

students exceptionally well. The breadth of the curriculum encompasses all the National Curriculum subjects except for design and technology and music, with an appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Students all learn a modern foreign language and choose between Arabic and Urdu. Religious education focuses on the study of Islam and includes an overview of the world's major world religions. It is extended by a well structured programme of Qur'anic studies. The planning of the curriculum enables students to take between eight and 12 subjects at GCSE level over a period of three years from Year 9, allowing gifted and talented students to accelerate their learning and students who progress at a slower rate to have more time and support. Provision for English, science, humanities and religious studies are particular strengths of the curriculum. Since the last inspection, the college has made significant improvements in the provision for English as an additional language and for students who have special educational needs, and this provision is now strong. These students have their needs identified early and well met; consequently, they can access the whole curriculum and make as much progress as their peers. Where students have a statement of special educational needs, the college provides an education that fulfils the requirements of the statements. Personal, social and health education is taught through several subjects; reflects the Islamic ethos of the college and makes a strong contribution to students' personal development. Careers guidance is very strong and successfully raises students' ambitions so that most move on to further education. The college has widened the range of resources used to teach the curriculum since the last inspection, most notably in art and in ICT. It has also significantly improved the range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities; this aspect of the provision is now good. Initiatives enrich students' experiences and broaden their knowledge.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and is monitored effectively by the senior leaders. Good teaching is underpinned by very good subject knowledge and effective planning based on a good understanding of students' needs and good knowledge of their prior attainment so that tasks match students' needs closely. Teachers employ a wide range of methods to suit students' varying learning styles and sustain their interest as they work on various challenging tasks. Where the teaching is outstanding, lessons are conducted at a relentless pace and a consistently high level of challenge is maintained for all students. Drama techniques are employed most effectively to promote students' communication and thinking skills. Occasionally, the teaching is only satisfactory because the pace of learning slackens or the tasks do not sufficiently challenge the more able students. Teachers promote the development of students' literacy effectively by modelling a good level of language, using open-ended questioning that demands full responses and providing visual support; however, they do not consistently encourage students to use dictionaries and provide accurate definitions. Teaching assistants provide at least good support to students. Since the last inspection, the college has further developed the use of assessment to support students' learning and accelerate their progress. However, while students understand exactly how to improve in some subjects through constructive marking and the use of improvement targets, the

existing best practice is not firmly established in all subjects. There are structured systems in place to assess students' learning and monitor their progress. However, the information from assessments is not used to challenge students consistently at a high level. Consequently, students do not always progress at the fastest possible rate in a minority of subjects, particularly in mathematics, Arabic and Urdu.

Nevertheless, as a direct result of the outstanding curriculum and good teaching, students make outstanding progress over time and achieve exceptionally highly. All students have achieved A\* to C grades in at least five subjects including English and mathematics since 2006. The 2009 GCSE results indicate exceptional achievement in religious studies, physics and chemistry; and very high achievement in English, humanities, biology and ICT.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students' enjoyment of college life is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality and in high levels of participation in lessons and in activities. Students are particularly appreciative of the excellent role models provided by the staff who create a purposeful learning atmosphere based on mutual respect, and encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. Consequently, students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Students form very positive relationships and feel free from harassment. They demonstrate that they value the spiritual and moral values which they are taught by contributing actively to the promotion of a very happy Islamic environment. The recitation of du'as (supplications) at the end of lessons and participation in congregational prayers, which they lead, provide them with spiritual pauses throughout the day. Their emotional well-being is enhanced by free access to counselling within an Islamic framework. Students display an impressive level of maturity and fairness when presenting very balanced views. They defend their personal convictions with spirit when debating topics. They are well-mannered and self-assured.

The college has significantly improved its provision for students' cultural and social development since the last inspection. Students contribute to improving college life through the student council and other leadership roles. They contribute to their local community by hosting visitors and making presentations to them on Islam; participating in netball or football competitions against local schools; speaking on local radio programmes; and organising community dinners to raise funds for charity. They contribute to the global community by allocating some of the funds raised to worthwhile causes such as a school for orphans in Eritrea. Students demonstrate excellent entrepreneurial skills when organising all aspects of a community mela (carnival), making good profits and saving them towards the purchase of interactive whiteboards. Students learn about public institutions through the citizenship programme and educational visits. Their knowledge of diverse cultures and religions is enhanced by a rich programme of cultural activities that includes visits to theatres and places of worship, and presentations to faith leaders during Ramadan. Students

develop excellent basic skills that prepare them extremely well for their future through the curriculum and through the enrichment programme, for example, participation in writing and public speaking competitions enhances their communication skills, and a residential trip helps Year 11 students focus on team building skills.

## Welfare, health and safety of the students

The college makes outstanding provision for students' welfare, health and safety. Safeguarding procedures are of a very high standard and staff receive the appropriate level of training in child protection. Policies and procedures, aimed at minimising risks in all circumstances, reflect the latest guidance, are comprehensive and implemented rigorously and consistently. Parents, carers and students have confidence in the school's ability to promote students' welfare, health and safety at all times. Students feel very safe and exceptionally well cared for, as a result of the college's zero tolerance of bullying and bad behaviour, and strong pastoral care. They have access to a nurse who is available for advice and for monitoring their health if they have medical conditions. Students' commitment to keeping themselves and others safe is developed extremely well through the main curriculum and through the enrichment programme. They have had training in fire and road safety, drugs awareness and the use of the internet. They participated actively in anti-bullying week and Year 8 students led an assembly on this subject. Provision for physical education includes a wide range of sports and is enhanced well by a fitness after-school club. Students take their health seriously and they are pro-active in further improving college canteen meals and the range of sports activities. The college fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all the necessary checks are carried out on staff prior to confirmation of their employment and that these checks are recorded in a central register as required.

## College's premises and accommodation

The compact premises provide teaching accommodation that is fit for purpose, well maintained and well decorated. The college shares a spacious computer room, a mosque, a dining hall and a playground with the adjoining primary school, which enhances students' learning and spiritual and social life effectively.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents, carers and others receive clear and up-to-date information mainly through the college website and a prospectus. Parents feel well informed of their daughters' progress through results in three annual formal assessments in all subjects, two formal meetings with teachers and an end-of-year report. Where students have a

statement of special educational needs, the college provides funding local authorities with the information required for the purpose of annual reviews.

## Procedures for handling complaints

There are suitable procedures in place for handling complaints promptly and fairly.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The college meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

## What the college could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the college might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that all students understand exactly how to improve in all subjects by establishing the best practice in marking and in the use of improvement targets
- help students accelerate their progress even further in all subjects by making better use of the information from assessments so that students can be challenged consistently at a high level.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of students' needs		✓		
How well students make progress in their learning	✓			

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of students	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of students

The overall welfare, health and safety of students	✓			
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## College details

Name of college	Al-Furqan Community College
DCSF number	330/6084
Unique reference number (URN)	103592
Type of college	Muslim secondary day school
Status	Independent
Date college opened	1992
Age range of students	11-16 years
Gender of students	Girls
Number on roll	128
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	2
Number of students who are looked after	0
Annual fees	£4,500
Address of college	Reddings Lane Tyseley Birmingham B11 3EY
Telephone number	0121 777 8666
Fax number	0121 777 1811
Email address	afccadmin@btopenworld.com
Principal	Mr Amjad Ahmed
Proprietor	Al-Furqan Educational Trust
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Dates of inspection	26–27 May 2010