

Inspection of Bahr Academy

72 Sceptre Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE4 6PR

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 July 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent
school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Bahr Academy is a welcoming environment in which pupils feel safe and cared for. The school's Islamic ethos underpins a strong culture of respect. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. The school has a considerate atmosphere in which everyone is valued. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils' experiences in lessons are inconsistent. Some activities do not support pupils to learn the most important information that teachers have identified. In some subjects, the expectations for what some pupils can learn are too low. The school does not ensure that the ambitious curriculum aims are the same for all pupils. However, pupils are eager to take part in the learning activities that teachers plan. Pupils behave well and want to do their best. In classrooms across the school, pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn.

The school encourages pupils to support each other. Younger pupils speak positively about the relationships they have with older pupils and the help they receive. Pupils are excited by their involvement in events, such as World Book Day and Cultures Day. They enjoy listening to external speakers talk to them about future career possibilities.

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

The school has a broad curriculum. Where the curriculum is strongest, the school has outlined clear learning goals. In many subjects, pupils make good progress and achieve positive outcomes, especially at key stage 4. However, in some subjects the curriculum intentions are not clear. This does not help pupils build more sophisticated knowledge.

The lesson activities in some lessons lack ambition. The school has not considered how to adapt learning activities so that all pupils can achieve ambitious curriculum goals. Sometimes, lesson activities do not support pupils to learn the knowledge identified in lesson plans. For some subjects, staff have not had the training they need to develop strong subject knowledge.

The school checks what pupils know when they start at the school. This ensures that it identifies those pupils who may need support for reading. The reading programme ensures that pupils encounter a range of different texts. Staff receive training to help them identify special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). While no pupils are currently identified as having SEND, teachers understand the signs to look for that may indicate pupils have SEND.

Pupils' attitudes to school are uniformly positive. Attendance at the school is incredibly high. Pupils value the experiences that they have at school and are eager to learn. The school has created an environment in which pupils feel able to speak openly about their concerns with each other and with staff. In lessons, pupils try their best. The work they produce shows commitment and determination. Low-level

disruption is very rare. The school's rewards system encourages pupils. They value the merits that teachers give them. One pupil's comment that the school is like a 'second home' exemplified the views of many.

The school provides pupils with leadership opportunities and experiences that motivate and excite them. For example, pupils organise enterprise days, fundraising events and participate in activities in the local community. There is a strong focus on pupils' mental well-being. The school makes connections between the Islamic curriculum and fundamental British values. This helps pupils to develop a strong understanding of their place in the community. The focus on tolerance and respect for others is particularly evident. The school is considering ways to increase the range of opportunities it offers pupils beyond the academic curriculum.

The school plans specific events to raise pupils' aspirations. For example, pupils have opportunities to meet female Muslim role models about careers and opportunities after they leave school. Pupils visit local colleges. The careers programme is connected to the academic curriculum so that pupils can see how their learning now connects to their future aspirations.

The proprietor and trustees seek external support where necessary, including in relation to the independent school standards (the standards). For example, recent work around site safety means that there is a strong focus on identifying and mitigating risk. The trustees support school leaders to ensure that the standards are met consistently.

There is a shared feeling of respect between staff and leaders. All at the school share a high ambition for pupils. However, the systems in place to monitor and check on the experiences of pupils do not ensure that this ambition is met consistently. This is particularly true of the curriculum. Staff are unanimously positive about their experiences of working at the school. The school's engagement with parents of the school is strong and parents hold very positive views about the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has an open safeguarding culture and seeks support from external agencies to provide staff training on safeguarding. However, record-keeping in relation to safeguarding incidents is not precise enough. It does not detail a clear chronology of events and actions taken by the school to provide support to pupils.

In addition, the school does not have a clear process in place to ensure that information can be shared effectively between safeguarding leaders and, sometimes, with other agencies that may need access to that information. The system to ensure safeguarding leadership and oversight continues in the absence of key staff is not defined well enough.

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

- Record-keeping and communication related to safeguarding are not strong enough. This means that important information related to the safety and well-being of pupils may not be accessible, or may not be shared, in a timely way. The school should ensure that systems to record and share safeguarding incidents, including with a clear chronology of actions, are strengthened. The school should also ensure rigorous oversight of these systems by the board of trustees.
- The proprietor has not ensured that staff have the training they need for all the subjects that they teach. This means that pedagogical approaches and lesson activities do not consistently support pupils to develop progressively more sophisticated knowledge. The activities for some pupils are not ambitious enough. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to deliver the school's planned curriculum so that all pupils achieve.
- In some subjects, the learning intentions do not show appropriate ambition for all pupils. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should across all subjects. The school should ensure that all subjects have clear learning intentions so that pupils are able to acquire the most important knowledge.

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	136258
DfE registration number	391/6040
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10374857
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	23
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Muhammad Abdulmuheet
Headteacher	Zakiah Chowdhury
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,400
Telephone number	0191 273 1907
Website	www.bahracademy.co.uk
Email address	info@bahracademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 to 14 January 2022

Information about this school

- Bahr Academy is an Islamic faith secondary school for girls.
- There are no pupils with SEND currently on roll.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school site has had two pre-registration inspections since the last standard inspection because the proprietor wants to open this site as a school for boys and relocate the provision for girls to a new site. The two pre-registration inspections were found to have independent school standards that were unlikely to be met related to the current premises. Leaders' actions since the most recent pre-registration inspection in March 2025 mean that this site now meets the independent school standards.
- The school currently operates from 72 Sceptre Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE4 6PR.
- The headteacher was not present during this inspection but did participate in the preparatory phone calls.

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 spoke with the proprietor, representatives of the board of trustees, the deputy head teacher, the head of Islamic studies and the head of school. Inspectors also spoke with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, humanities and personal, social and health education. 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 for mathematics, science and physical education and looked at examples of pupils' work in mathematics and science.
- To check in the independent school standards, inspectors toured the school site, visited outdoor spaces and scrutinised records related to site safety. Inspectors

also considered the records related to the handling of complaints and the provision of information.

- 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.
- Inspectors also held meetings with leaders responsible for personal development and careers. They also observed breaktimes.

The school's proposed change to the age range of pupils, its premises and the maximum number of pupils.

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**
- During the inspection, it became apparent that the proprietor had tried to withdraw the school's application to increase the age-range to include pupils from 11 to 18. However, this aspect of the material change inspection was still commissioned by the DfE. The school intends to move into the proposed new building with an increased capacity and then, at some point in the future, seek a material change to the age-range of the pupils.
- The curriculum plans in place do not adequately take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of those pupils who would be over the age of 16. The written policies do not show any current plans to ensure that curriculum is appropriate for those pupils over compulsory school age.
- The emergency lighting linked to the fire alarm system for the proposed new premises was signed off as ready to use in January 2024 by a competent assessor. Since then, the proprietor has carried out regular tests on the system. However, the certificate says it is recommended that the emergency lighting is inspected again within six months of the original sign off. There is no evidence that this has happened.
- The building for the proposed new premises is being extensively refurbished by the proprietor. Phase one of the programme has been completed. However, the refurbished building has not yet been signed off by appropriate assessors to say that it meets relevant building regulations. It is not certain, therefore, that the building conforms to required regulations.
- While many aspects of the work related to the proposed new site have been completed, there are elements that are yet to be properly signed off. The proprietor has not ensured that the building is immediately ready for use.

The school is unlikely to meet the following standards

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an education, health and care plan; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and

Information about the material change inspection

- To inspect the proposed material change, inspectors toured the proposed new school site.
- Inspectors also considered documents related to building safety and maintenance.
- In addition, inspectors scrutinised the proposed staffing of the school when the move to the new building takes place.

Inspection team

Matthew Vellensworth, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Katie Spurr	Ofsted Inspector

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