

Al-Burhan Grammar School

Spring Road Centre, 258 Spring Road, Tyseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B11 3DW

Inspection dates

6–13 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders have the highest aspirations for all pupils. The whole school community shares their passion and drive to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils at Al-Burhan thrive in all aspects of their education. The broad and balanced curriculum provides pupils with rich learning experiences, which helps them to achieve academic excellence.
- Teaching across every subject and every year group is of the highest quality. Teachers respond to pupils' learning rapidly. Not a moment of learning is lost. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress and achieve highly by the end of Year 11.
- Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is exceptionally well supported. Pupils are confident and self-assured. They show a remarkably mature attitude to all aspects of their learning and a true desire to learn. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable.
- Governors understand the strengths of the school, but also challenge leaders to seek further ways to improve the school continually. As a result, the school continues to go from strength to strength.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff take all possible steps to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding of fundamental British values are excellent. Respect, tolerance and acceptance are actively promoted by everyone within the school. Pupils are prepared superbly for life in modern Britain, and the wider world.
- Teachers receive supportive professional development, and work collaboratively to improve their practice. This maintains the high quality of teaching across the school.
- Leaders understand the requirements of the independent school standards and ensure that these are met in full.
- Attendance has shown improvements over time. However, leaders do not take sufficient action to ensure that some pupils do not miss too much school for no good reason.
- Leaders have ensured that the internal learning environment supports pupils' learning well. However, leaders have not ensured that the outdoor environment is of the same quality.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders continue to work with families to improve the attendance of pupils who miss too much school or arrive late without good reason, fully implementing the school's policy on attendance.
- Improve the quality of the external environment so it matches that of the internal environment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders are effective in ensuring that all the requirements for the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have a very strong focus on academic excellence, along with high aspirations for all pupils. They know precisely what the strengths of the school are, and where additional improvements could be made to improve the education of pupils even further. Leaders are relentless in their drive and determination to ensure that every pupil is supported to achieve their full potential. Their mission statement is: 'to be dedicated to learning as it is the foundation for life'. Everyone within the school is committed to this mission, including the pupils. Consequently, pupils' achievements by the end of Year 11 are consistently high.
- Leaders are committed to providing pupils with a curriculum that gives them rich and broad learning experiences. The curriculum is shaped around pupils' needs to enable them to reach their full academic potential. Comprehensive schemes of work are in place, which teachers use to develop learning over time exceptionally well, especially pupils' literacy, mathematical and scientific skills.
- Pupils receive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education of the highest quality, especially in relation to personal safety. In addition to this, pupils learn about a range of world affairs and events through well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning opportunities. The art curriculum enables pupils to explore their creative skills very well. Even if pupils choose not to study art to GCSE level, they are still provided with opportunities to engage in artistic learning. Physical education (PE) has been enhanced through the provision of swimming lessons and other physical activities, utilising local leisure facilities.
- The curriculum is enhanced well by a range of trips and visits. For example, pupils visit places of worship such as a Gurdwara, engage in historical visits to places such as Warwick Castle and the Holocaust museum, and supplement their scientific learning with visits to the Sea Life Centre. Pupils experience an outstanding curriculum, which helps them to achieve highly academically, but also develops them into mature and considerate young people, with a desire to learn and achieve their very best.
- Leaders go to great lengths to promote fundamental British values with pupils. In particular, pupils' understanding of respect and tolerance is remarkably strong. Pupils know that people live their lives in different ways and say, 'Everyone has the right to live their life the way they choose.' Pupils are keen to learn about other religions, comparing them to their own faith. Pupils are not only extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain, but also for life in the wider world.
- Leaders make very careful teaching appointments, and ensure that teachers are held to account for pupils' outcomes. However, this is carried out in a highly collaborative and supportive way. Teachers pair up with a colleague and are provided with opportunities to share their teaching practice. Teachers then provide feedback to one another to improve this practice. Targets for improvement are agreed together and then reviewed in subsequent checks on the quality of learning and teaching.

- Teachers see the lesson observations as 'learning opportunities' and there is a strong culture of trust and teamwork across the school. Teachers are also very keen to learn from new and trainee teachers, incorporating new ideas and teaching methods into their practice to further enhance their teaching skills.
- Professional development is carefully planned to improve the quality of teaching and learning further. For example, staff have recently received training on improving feedback to pupils. Leaders review how teachers' feedback improves learning by checking books and providing development areas to the teachers. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice. They carry out self-reviews, and review the outcomes of the GCSE examinations to identify where improvements could be made. Because of this supportive and collaborative approach to professional development, teaching is exceptionally strong in all subject areas and continues to develop.
- Parents and carers speak very highly of the school. There is strong support for the values and ethos of the school. Parents appreciate the way that their children's understanding of respect and tolerance towards diversity is developed. For example, one parent commented on their child's exceptionally well developed understanding of world affairs, and how she is able to consider these events in a balanced way.
- During the initial stages of the inspection, the headteacher and chair of governors did not fully cooperate with inspectors to enable the inspection to progress smoothly. Ofsted did not consider this to be acceptable, and took appropriate action in line with current published policies and procedures to ensure that the inspection could continue. The headteacher and chair of governors subsequently worked cooperatively and positively with the inspection team. Despite the initial issues, the overall findings of the inspection show that the leadership and management of the school is of a very high quality and promotes excellent educational experiences for all pupils.

Governance

- The proprietor and governing body have an excellent understanding of the school's performance. Governors have a deep commitment to the school's values and ethos, especially the values relating to equality, tolerance, acceptance and respect, and say, 'It is the heart and soul of what we do.'
- Governors view their role as a 'critical friend'. They provide challenge to the headteacher, and check that pupils are provided with a high-quality education to enable them to make the best possible progress in their learning. Governors are determined to provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum to help them achieve the highest academic outcomes possible. For example, last year governors recognised that pupils would benefit from the challenge of a GCSE computing course. This has now been introduced, with the current Year 10 pupils studying for this qualification.
- Regular communication with the headteacher keeps governors up to date with any issues or concerns. Governors recognise that the strong volunteering ethos within the school is a key strength. The community spirit fostered within the school by leaders at all levels provides a caring and nurturing learning environment for all pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. These are set out in a detailed policy, which is available on the school's website. The policy takes account of, and meets, current government requirements.
- Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding at Al-Burhan School. Staff receive regular safeguarding training from the headteacher. This training focuses on particular forms of abuse, how to recognise them and what to do if staff have any concerns about pupils' safety. All staff are aware of their duties to keep pupils safe, and they all stated through Ofsted's staff questionnaire that they feel pupils are safe in school. Safeguarding records and files demonstrate the effective and appropriate actions that leaders take to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep safe online. The PSHE education curriculum supports their understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of different situations exceptionally well. For example, a recent assembly focused on the '#MeToo' campaign and explained the importance of reporting any abuse, and how to seek help if needed. Leaders place a high priority on protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremism. They do not shy away from ensuring that pupils understand what it is, and how to protect themselves.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are of a consistently high standard across all year groups and all subjects. Teachers use the school's assessment systems to plan carefully to meet pupils' learning needs. Teachers also respond quickly to pupils' learning in lessons. When pupils show they understand a particular concept or activity, teachers intervene rapidly to move their learning on even further. However, teachers also provide pupils with additional support where needed. As a result, pupils make excellent progress in lessons and over time, and outcomes are consistently high across all subjects.
- Teachers use high-quality questions to probe and develop pupils' thinking. Teachers encourage pupils to share their thoughts and ideas, which results in high levels of engagement in their learning. For example, during the inspection pupils were asked to share their responses with a partner. Where pupils' answers were different, teachers encouraged pupils to convince their partner why their answer was right.
- The strong relationships between pupils and teachers, in addition to the positive pupil relationships, give pupils confidence to share their learning in a supportive environment. There is a deep culture of learning and a strong work ethos within the school. Pupils are committed to learning because they have a deep-seated desire to succeed. This further supports the excellent progress they make in lessons.
- Work in pupils' books in all subject areas shows that pupils are making substantial progress over time. Teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They provide pupils with feedback, which helps them to reflect on their learning, and to make improvements. Work builds upon prior learning, showing that teachers take into account what pupils have shown they understand. Work in books from all year groups also shows that pupils' learning is built upon from one year to the next. This helps pupils to achieve excellent academic outcomes by the end of Year 11.

- Pupils have a passion and enjoyment for reading. Pupils read fluently and confidently tackle new and unfamiliar texts. Pupils show a high level of comprehension skills and enjoy discussing their reading. Reading is a notable strength of the school.
- Teachers provide parents with detailed information about their children's progress. Termly reports inform parents of pupils' achievements in each subject area. Where any concerns arise, leaders work closely with parents to find ways to help pupils overcome any difficulties. Annual reports provide parents with very detailed information about pupils' progress, attainment and their commitment to learning in all subject areas.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured learners. This is because all staff provide pupils with care and support that helps them to believe in themselves and what they could potentially achieve.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered, and show an exceptionally high level of respect towards staff, visitors and to one another. This means that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils understand what bullying is and know that if it does happen, it will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers information, advice and guidance to help them consider their future career paths. There are strong links with local businesses and professionals come into school to work with pupils. All pupils are supported to undertake a work experience placement. Pupils also receive support to apply to sixth-form colleges. Staff are passionate about encouraging pupils to aim high for their futures. Pupils told inspectors that they want to pursue careers in areas such as education and politics. In 2017, all pupils went on to A-level courses in a sixth-form college. Currently, all Year 11 pupils are also applying to attend a sixth-form college.
- Pupils have an extensive range of opportunities to learn about themselves and the importance of individual liberty. For example, during the inspection pupils discussed their learning about international women's day, celebrating the achievements of a number of women, and the importance of having an education. The girls are unanimous in their understanding of their right to a high-quality education. Pupils' confidence is further developed by opportunities to participate in public speaking, for example in assemblies.
- The internal learning environment is mostly well maintained and displays celebrate pupils' learning. For example, corridor walls are adorned with pupils' artwork, which is of a high standard. The inside environment is free from litter. However, the external environment is not of the same standard as that found internally. This is in part due to the prospective development plans of the school. Nonetheless, leaders have not ensured that this area is routinely free from litter. This does not provide an attractive environment for pupils to play and socialise in. However, pupils' safety is not compromised.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Conduct in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school is exemplary. Inspectors noted particularly the way pupils opened doors for them, how they were keen to share their views and the way they smiled, welcoming the inspectors to their school warmly.
- Leaders have established a system to record any sanctions. However, given the excellent behaviour across the school these are few and far between. On the very rare occasions where concerns arise about pupils' conduct, special daily monitoring is implemented to improve any inappropriate behaviour rapidly.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour systems. However, their dedication to and passion for their learning is such that they say, 'There is no point in not behaving well because it is us that will lose out.' Pupils adhere to, and value greatly, the school's rules. Pupils speak very highly of the reward systems. The most sought out award is the 'headteacher's award'. Pupils feel they are rewarded generously for their achievements, efforts and good deeds. They recognise that each of these factors are important to celebrate.
- Rates of attendance have been variable over recent years. Some poor absence can often be attributed to a small number of families who decide to take holidays in term time. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has also been high in the past. Leaders do not adhere to the attendance policy to address the attendance of persistently absent pupils rigorously enough. Although the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced over recent years, leaders acknowledge that it has been unnecessarily high in the past.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Prior to starting the school, pupils sit an entrance test. Leaders use this information, in addition to any available information from pupils' previous schools, to support their assessments of pupils' achievements on entry to the school. The school's assessment information shows that pupils enter the school with skills and abilities which are broadly typical for their age.
- Pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 11 are consistently high because teaching helps pupils to make excellent progress year on year. By the end of Year 11, outcomes in the GCSE examinations across all subjects are consistently higher than the national average achieved by maintained schools. In 2017, all pupils achieved a good pass in GCSE English and mathematics.
- The school's assessment systems track pupils' progress in every curriculum subject. Pupils sit termly assessments. 'Student reviews' are carried out following the assessments, and leaders use the outcomes of these assessments to check carefully on pupils' progress. Pupils who are falling behind in their learning, or not making the progress they should, are identified quickly. Leaders then ensure that the right support is put in place to help the pupils catch up with where they should be. Leaders also work closely with families to seek further ways to support pupils' learning. While leaders do not track the progress of different groups of pupils, the tracking systems are of a highly individualised nature, which means that all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential.
- Following the termly assessments, pupils review their own learning. They are given the opportunity to reflect on how well they feel their learning is progressing, but also where

they feel they need more support and guidance. Teachers discuss these reviews with the pupils and ensure that any help that is needed is provided.

- Pupils are set challenging targets in all subjects. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and they strive to achieve their very best. This means that pupils, whatever their ability, make excellent progress in all subject areas and achieve highly by the end of Year 11.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils identified as disadvantaged, or as having special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. However, leaders show appropriate consideration towards addressing any identified need, if it were to be required.
- Because of the excellent teaching and learning opportunities, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for next stage in their education.

School details

Unique reference number	134034
DfE registration number	330/6104
Inspection number	10038833

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	108
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Al-Burhan Foundation
Chair	Dr Mohammad Nasrullah
Headteacher	Dr Mohammad Nasrullah
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,900–£4,200
Telephone number	0121 440 5454
Website	www.alburhan.org.uk
Email address	admin@alburhan.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- Al-Burhan Grammar School is an independent school that caters for girls between the ages of 11 to 16.
- The headteacher is also the chair of the proprietorial board.
- The school's mission is: 'to be dedicated to learning as it is the foundation for life'.
- The school is registered for 140 pupils and currently has 108 pupils on roll.
- All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- No pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. No pupils have an education, health and care plan.

- No pupils are known to be disadvantaged.
- No pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The last full inspection was carried out in November 2014, where the school was judged to be outstanding. Ofsted carried out an emergency inspection of the school in March 2016 at the request of the Department for Education. Some unmet independent school standards were found on this inspection. A further emergency inspection was carried out in November 2016, again at the request of the Department for Education. All standards checked at this emergency inspection were found to be met.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors arrived at the school to start the inspection on 6 March 2018.
- When inspectors returned on 7 March 2018, day 2 of the scheduled inspection, the headteacher refused to allow them to continue the inspection. The inspection recommenced on 12 March with a different lead inspector, and it concluded on 13 March 2018.
- A material change to the proprietor was completed on 8 March 2018. The proprietor is now the Al-Burhan Foundation.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning by visiting lessons, talking to pupils as they worked and looking at the work in their books.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, who is chair of the proprietorial board; teachers with responsibility for assessment and monitoring the quality of teaching; other school staff; the chair of the governing body and another governor; and a group of pupils. Inspectors also listened to some pupils from Years 7, 9 and 11 read. Inspectors spoke informally with other staff and pupils as they moved around school.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 staff survey submissions and the three responses to the Parent View online survey. An inspector spoke with parents as they dropped their children at school.
- A range of documents was examined, including the school's plans for improvement; minutes of meetings of the governing body; curriculum plans; policies relating to health and safety and pupils' welfare; and information about pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding. The headteacher verbally explained his evaluation of how well the school is performing.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Satchwell	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Keay	Her Majesty's Inspector

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