



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Report for a Progress Monitoring Visit

Bury Park Educational Institute (Al Hikmah Secondary School)

July 2022

School's details

School	Bury Park Educational Institute (Al Hikmah Secondary School)
DfE number	821/6007
Address	Bury Park Educational Institute (Al Hikmah Secondary School) 82–86 Dunstable Road Luton Bedfordshire LU1 1EH
Telephone number	01582 728196
Email address	admin@alhikmahschool.com
Acting Headteacher	Mr Abdul Muhit
Proprietor	Bury Park Educational Trust
Age range	11 to 16
Number of pupils on roll	196
Date of visit	14 July 2022

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Bury Park Educational Institute, also known as Al-Hikmah Secondary School, is an independent school for female pupils. It is located in Luton. A separately registered school for male pupils, which forms part of the Institute, is located a few miles away. The Bury Park Educational Trust maintains oversight of the school, led by its chair, supported by a management committee. The acting headteacher, appointed in October 2021 leads the school and the linked school for male pupils. The deputy headteacher, appointed in January 2022, is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of Bury Park Educational Institute.
- 1.2 The school comprises a single senior department. The school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection which took place in November 2021.

Purpose of the visit

- 1.3 This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan required following the focused compliance and educational quality inspection of November 2021. Leaders failed to submit their action plan to the DfE prior to this inspection. Inspectors reviewed the school's action plan during the visit. The visit focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs).

Regulations which were the focus of the visit	Team judgements
Part 1, paragraphs 2 (curriculum) and 2A (relationships and sex education)	Not met
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)	Not met
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Not met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 – 20 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 4, paragraph 21 (single central record)	Not met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints procedure)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Not met

2. Inspection findings

Quality of education provided – curriculum and relationships and sex education [ISSR Part 1, paragraphs 2 and 2A]

- 2.1 The school does not meet the standards. At the previous inspection the school met these standards.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate curriculum in place for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The policy for relationships and sex education (RSE) is available to parents on the school's website. In drawing up the policy and scheme of work the school has consulted pupils, parents and staff taking their views into consideration. The programme is designed effectively so that topics are revisited in subsequent years in order to build up deeper understanding. The scheme of work includes all of the requirements of the DfE's statutory guidance for RSE.
- 2.3 However, implementation of the curriculum is inconsistent as teaching does not stress sufficiently the importance of equality and respect for protected characteristics. Implementation of the requirement to encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act, is not successful. Protected characteristics, in particular those relating to gender, LGBTQ+ and the role of females in modern society, are only referred to obliquely in work during Years 7 and 8 under the topic of family and relationships. The teaching of these aspects of the curriculum is therefore not effective.
- 2.4 Pupils have limited access to accurate, up-to-date careers advice. Advice is often restricted to letters of application and supporting work experience opportunities. Guidance for staff is too restricted in scope about how to address these areas. Pupils are not provided with sufficient help to make informed choices about a range of career options.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.5 The school does not meet the standard.
- 2.6 The PSHE programme reflects the school values, which include following the Quran, collective teamwork and striving for excellence.
- 2.7 The school's value of tolerance for all is not met. Teaching does not do enough to promote and encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act. In discussions with pupils, they commented that they do not feel that all staff and pupils show equal respect for the protected characteristics as evident in other pupils and others in the wider community. Schemes of work do not provide enough guidance for staff to teach these aspects thoroughly and with confidence.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.8 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.9 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.10 The school does not meet the standard.

- 2.11 The content of the school's safeguarding policy is supported by additional policies, such as the code of conduct for staff, whistle-blowing procedures and procedures for safer recruitment. Not all elements of these policies are implemented effectively.
- 2.12 Pupils feel listened to by staff. There are many opportunities to raise any concerns about what might happen both in school and outside of school. However, records show that there are incidents where the school's response has not been quick enough. Concerns, such as pupil exposure to potentially harmful sexual behaviour, have not been referred to appropriate external agencies in a timely manner.
- 2.13 The named designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is the acting headteacher, who is based at the linked school. The deputy headteacher fulfils the role of DSL at the school. Other named members of staff with safeguarding responsibilities have not been recently or suitably trained. The deputy headteacher has sole responsibility at the school in this respect and is not sufficiently supported by other members of the safeguarding team. They lack the knowledge and understanding to fulfil their roles effectively. The proprietor does not ensure there is sufficient oversight of the implementation of the safeguarding policy.
- 2.14 Regular safeguarding training for staff is in place, but this is not sufficiently effective. It identifies aspects such as child-on-child abuse, including harmful sexual behaviours, sexual harassment and sexual violence. However, records of staff attendance are not accurate and absence from training is not followed up effectively. Staff cannot demonstrate a sufficient awareness of their training and their safeguarding responsibilities. This was identified in a recent safeguarding audit, which showed that staff are not fully aware of where to report safeguarding concerns, and therefore tend to inform the behaviour management team instead. Staff are prompted to do so by an inaccurate flow chart within the school's guidance. Staff are not sure that any concerns raised had been communicated to the DSL.
- 2.15 Since the previous inspection, arrangements for handling allegations against staff are included in the school's safeguarding procedures. Staff understand how to raise any concerns they might have about adults, including about school leaders. However, staff are unsure of the procedure to follow if the person they are required to report to was off site.
- 2.16 The school has not ensured that all required recruitment checks, in particular checks of references and prohibition from management, are completed before staff commence their roles at the school.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

- 2.17 The school does not meet all of the standards.
- 2.18 Checks on staff required under the standard are carried out. Checks undertaken show that proprietors and supply staff are suitable for their role.
- 2.19 A single central register of appointments is maintained but the entry dates for checks are not sufficiently accurate.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.20 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33]

- 2.21 The school meets the standard.
- 2.22 The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory standards. The school policy for handling parental complaints

states that complaints, if any, are handled through a three-stage process (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales and, at the third stage, the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. The handling of complaints received since the previous inspection has followed the school's policy.

- 2.23 Since the previous inspection, the school has reviewed procedures for the implementation of the complaints procedure policy. The school had not always kept suitable records of all formal complaints, and the records included behaviour, curriculum and well-being concerns raised by pupils. Records of concerns raised by pupils about behaviour, curriculum and well-being are now recorded appropriately elsewhere by senior leaders. The complaints record now consists of informal complaints by parents that have been made directly to the school. No formal complaints have been raised since the previous inspection. The governors of the school now have access to the record of complaints. Governors' meeting minutes show that they support and challenge school leadership appropriately when a complaint is made.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.24 The school does not meet the standard.

- 2.25 The proprietor does not ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the requisite standards are met and they promote the well-being of the pupils. In particular, oversight of arrangements for safeguarding, PSHE teaching and careers guidance does not ensure that all elements of regulatory requirements are covered effectively.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

ISSR Part 1, Quality of Education – curriculum and relationships and sex education, paragraphs 2 and 2A

The proprietor must ensure that:

- the school's curriculum and teaching of PSHE and RSE promotes consistent respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act and statutory guidance for RSE [paragraphs 2(2)(d)(ii) and 2(A)(1)(d)];
- pupils are provided with a suitably broad range of accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner, enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential [paragraph 2(2)(e)(i-iii)].

ISSR Part 2, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, paragraph 5

- The proprietor must ensure that principles are actively and effectively promoted which encourage in all pupils respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act, including those who are LGBTQ+ [paragraph 5(b)(vi)].

ISSR Part 3, Welfare, health and safety, safeguarding, paragraph 7

The proprietor must ensure that:

- arrangements for responding to and recording incidents of concern raised by staff across the school meet the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE), ensuring that records distinguish between safeguarding concerns and other matters [paragraph 7(a) and (b)];
- the school responds promptly and appropriately when any safeguarding concerns are raised, in accordance with school policy and locally agreed procedures [paragraph 7(a) and (b)];
- all members of the safeguarding team are suitably trained to fulfil their responsibilities effectively [paragraph 7(a) and (b)];
- all staff understand their responsibility to recognise and report any potential safeguarding concerns swiftly and in line with statutory guidance [paragraph 7(a) and (b)];
- records of attendance at safeguarding training are kept appropriately and any absences are followed up effectively [paragraph 7(a) and (b)];
- all the required recruitment checks on staff, in particular checks of references and prohibition from management, are completed before they commence their roles at the school [paragraph 7(a) and (b)];
- oversight and management of safeguarding by governors is sufficient to ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].

ISSR Part 4, Suitability of staff, paragraph 21

- The proprietor must ensure that an appropriate single central register of appointments is kept, in particular, that dates when checks are made are entered accurately [paragraph 21(3)(a)(iii)].

ISSR Part 8, Leadership and management, paragraph 34

- The proprietor must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities use their skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively to promote the well-being of pupils and to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met [paragraph 34(1)(a),(b) and (c)].

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of staff. They met with a group of governors. Inspectors visited different areas of the school, observed lessons and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.