

Inspection of Nishkam High School

Great King Street North, Birmingham, West Midlands B19 2LF

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 March 2025

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

The co-principals of this school are Emma Wilks and Chris Deeks. This school is part of the Nishkam Schools Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Brinder Singh Mahon, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Evans.

What is it like to attend this school?

Nishkam High School is rooted in its inclusivity and academic excellence. Its values and virtues, such as 'moderation' and 'simplicity,' underpin every aspect of school life. Pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy their learning. It is a place open to all, where pupils can feel accepted and integrated, including those from other faiths or none and those facing challenges with their learning. Pupils show respect for each other's different faiths and beliefs. They also learn about the culture of other countries, such as 'La Chandeleur', which pupils studying French celebrated by making pancakes.

Leaders have very high ambitions for all to do well. Pupils achieve very highly in the school as well as in the sixth form, where very many go on to university.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They know there is always an adult to talk to if they need to. They conduct themselves exceptionally well in lessons and around school and thrive on the additional responsibilities, such as being 'safeguarding leaders'. They enjoy a wide range of events. These include regular debates, most recently on artificial intelligence, and a trip to a local symphony hall to see Tchaikovsky's 'Swan Lake'.

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

The school has designed a curriculum built on its language of virtues. It is rooted in academic success at GCSE through the English Baccalaureate subjects of English, mathematics, science, humanities and languages. Entry levels are exceptionally high, as is pupil achievement. This is because the school has sequenced the curriculum very well to give pupils the knowledge they need to learn for success. Other curriculum routes and courses ensure that all pupils can achieve exceptionally well from their different starting points. Students also achieve very highly in the sixth form.

Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge in their teaching. The school makes sure they teach to their specialisms wherever possible so that pupils have access to the very best subject knowledge to help with their learning.

The promotion of reading is a continuous thread running through a pupil's development in school. Appropriate support is in place to meet the needs of those pupils still at the early stage of reading. This enables them to be more confident and fluent in their reading.

The school succeeds in its philosophy that 'excellence is for every child', regardless of the challenges they face. This is central to its practice to adapt the curriculum to ensure that it is accessible to all, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those learning English as an additional language. Very accurate early identification means the school meets pupils' needs promptly. Students with SEND can also access courses successfully in the sixth form as a result of very high-quality provision and support.

Teachers check pupils' learning very carefully to establish what they have learned and where there may be gaps still to address. In the sixth form, students become astute in improving their work by teachers pinpointing accurately where they need to improve. Pupils attend school very regularly, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Leaders diligently follow up and address any barriers to attendance. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They are mature and act with responsibility and courtesy. There is a clear behaviour policy, understood by all, which the school implements consistently well. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident any incidents are dealt with swiftly.

The school promotes personal development exceptionally well. It presents elements of the personal, social, health and economic education programme through subjects. For example, in science, pupils learn about the lives of great scientists to encourage a sense of awe and wonder in the natural world. In geography, they consider the concept of 'greed' and the 'virtue of sacrifice'.

Pupils have frequent opportunities to reflect, for example when hearing the story of a Holocaust survivor from Auschwitz. There is a wide array of additional opportunities on offer, for example the 'STEAM' club to promote girls' interest in science. There are also opportunities for all pupils to develop a passion for mathematics through extracurricular clubs and sessions in the subject. Leadership roles include prefects, librarians and sports captains. Pupils have a very secure understanding of fundamental British values.

The school makes sure all pupils from Year 7 onwards have the right level of information, impartial advice and experiences to plan the next steps for their future careers. Students in the sixth form benefit from an extensive work experience programme.

Leaders take full account of staff workload and consult widely on further steps they can take. Those with responsibility for governance are very mindful of leaders' well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138586
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343982
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	670
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	112
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Evans
CEO of the trust	Brinder Singh Mahon
Co-Principals	Emma Wilks and Chris Deeks
Website	http://www.nishkamschooltrust.org/
Dates of previous inspection	30 April and 1 May 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a local advisory board has been established to replace the previous local governing body.
- The co-principals were appointed after the last inspection.
- The school currently does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has a Sikh ethos. The last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in June 2015. The next scheduled inspection should take place by July 2025.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the co-principals, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils to learn their views of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust and the acting chair of the local advisory board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, computer science, design and technology, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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

Mark Sims, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Darren Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Lois Kelly	Ofsted Inspector

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