

# Salafi Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

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DfE registration number	928/6067
Unique Reference Number (URN)	133603
Inspection number	361404
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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## **PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Salafi Independent School, previously known as Madrassah Salafiyyah, is a Muslim primary day school in Small Heath, Birmingham. It admits boys and girls aged from six to 11 years and is registered for 160 pupils. Currently, there are 152 pupils on roll and all the families that send their children to the school are practising Muslims. These families are mainly of British Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African heritage, although there are an increasing number of pupils from other backgrounds. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs and all pupils speak English and more than one other language. When pupils enter school in Year 1, boys and girls are taught together. In Years 3 to 6 boys and girls are taught separately by staff of the same gender. The school aims to: 'Ensure children are inspired with a sense of virtue. To know and believe that sincerity, for the sake of Allah, honesty, respect, responsibility and courage is the only way for a good Muslim to be. The way to achieve this is by following the example of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), his companions, and the righteous of the generations that followed.' A board of trustees oversees the school's work. The school had its first inspection in January 2008.

## **EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL**

The school has made good progress since its previous inspection. It complies with all of the regulations and now provides a good quality of education for the pupils. Teachers have successfully created a strong spiritual and nurturing environment, firmly based on Islamic principles and effectively meeting its stated aim of incorporating the Salafi ethos into the heart of each pupil's education. Teaching and the curriculum, including Qur'anic and Islamic, studies are good. Assessment information is now being used more effectively to plan lessons of consistent quality; consequently, pupils make good progress in their learning and excellent progress spiritually and morally. There is full compliance with all regulations pertaining to the safer recruitment of staff and completion of the single central record of safeguarding checks. Nonetheless, further work needs to be done to improve some aspects of provision and the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

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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)

## Quality of education

The quality of education is good and the school fulfils its aims well. There have been clear improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in the curriculum which is now good. The Islamic curriculum is also much improved and underpinned and well-informed by a new scheme that incorporates Islamic doctrine (Aqeedah), the Qur'an's relationship to science, the biography of the Prophet (Seerah) and Islamic history, worship (Ibaadat) and moral understanding (Sunnah). The daily routines such as Duaa (supplication) and Zohar Salah (lunchtime prayer) enable pupils to practise their faith and develop a sense of community. Boys and girls learn to distinguish right from wrong through Qur'anic studies and this strengthens their personal, social and health education. All pupils have weekly targets in Qur'anic classes, negotiated between the class teacher and the coordinator who regularly observes each group evaluating pupils' progress and enjoyment of Qur'anic learning. Consequently, the teaching is consistent and offers well-structured progression.

The Islamic curriculum is complemented well by a secular programme of study, firmly based on the National Curriculum. All are underpinned by detailed policies and schemes of work that provide effective emphasis on, and detailed coverage of, the core skills of literacy and numeracy, so as to ensure that all pupils build on them securely from year-to-year and make good progress. A further strength of the curriculum is the highly effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) that leads to the pupils making good progress. Pupils have access to a wide range of technology, including handheld computers, MP3 players, laptops and interactive slates.

The quality of teaching and assessment has improved since the time of the school's previous inspection and is now good. It has improved because the senior leaders have engaged in effective partnerships with several local primary schools. These have not only improved teachers' confidence and knowledge of the subjects they teach but also led to greater consistency in the quality of lesson planning and assessment. This has been particularly effective in providing activities that are more closely matched to the pupils' needs in most subjects, including Arabic and Islamic studies. Varied teaching styles, such as the setting of targets, effective use of pupil-paired speaking partners, and group work provide increased opportunities for boys and girls to reflect on what they are learning. In mathematics, good opportunities are used to engage pupils in more open-ended investigations and problem-solving activities; as a result standards are above average in this area.

The good teaching observed during lessons has some common features: teachers have high expectations of behaviour and use questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking; there is good pace to most lessons and some magical moments that clearly captivate pupils' interest, particularly for the boys, such as the 'mad science' programme which provides an exciting stimulus for science investigations. Of particular note is the very positive relationships teachers have with their pupils and

the effective use of praise and encouragement to motivate them. These features were exemplified in a Year 6 science lesson on the effects of forces on liquids. The pupils buzzed with excitement, and worked in a mature and independent manner, to predict the outcome of forcing water through holes of different sizes because they clearly understood the task and what it was they were learning. Pupils forge ahead in such lessons because the work is challenging and the teachers communicate their good subject knowledge effectively.

Weaker lessons tend to focus on the teaching rather than on the pupils' learning and are too teacher directed. Some teachers do not make use visual resources, including multi-media equipment, and pupils are often unclear how to complete the tasks set. Consequently, in the satisfactory lessons pupils were often passive and a few were inattentive. In these lessons, the activities planned did not always cater sufficiently for all abilities, particularly the most able. Teachers do not make full use of information gained from assessments: this has a particular impact in writing, where the teachers miss opportunities to consolidate skills taught in English lessons to develop pupils' extended writing. Consequently, standards in writing across some year groups, for both boys and girls are below average because writing skills are not taught consistently or systematically. Also, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use a range of more complex writing styles and experience different genres. The school is well aware of these shortcomings and is taking steps to bring about improvement. Senior leaders keep a close eye on what goes on in the classrooms: they make regular visits to check that school policies are implemented and regularly give teachers clear written advice on how to improve their teaching. The school also provides staff with good continuing professional development opportunities, such as observing good practice in other local primary schools, with which good links have been established.

## **SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS**

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all ages is good and an important strength. The Islamic ethos of the school underpins all its work. There is a friendly, welcoming atmosphere, and pupils say that they are happy and enjoy their school life. This is well reflected in their good behaviour, positive attitudes towards learning and regular attendance. Pupils are consistently encouraged to consider their behaviour and apply the respect rules. Pupils are aware of the green, amber and red cards and golden time which are used as part of the school's sanction and reward systems.

Since its previous inspection the school has made significant improvement in the areas of developing awareness of public institutions and promoting respect for different cultures. Islamic studies offer pupils the opportunity to reflect on parallel traditions within other faiths, while continuing to support their Islamic practice. Consequently, both of these aspects are now good. Much of the improvement has been achieved through increasing the number and range of educational visits and visitors. For example, visitors include people from different institutions, such as the

emergency services, and visits include different places of worship and numerous joint educational visits with other local primary schools.

Pupils are given responsibilities within the school. They show an understanding of environmental issues and undertake some re-cycling tasks in school. They are developing ICT very well and have an awareness of e-safety in the context of internet searches. They contribute to the school council and have directed Zakat (charitable) appeals towards less-privileged communities and supporting their own community through Waqf (religious educational charity). This, along with other projects around managing money and good provision for pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics, means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and also know what it means to contribute both to the school and the local community.

## **WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS**

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is much improved and now satisfactory. A range of relevant policies has been implemented, including a suitable plan to address a range of disability, discrimination and access issues. Pupils of all ages feel safe in school because they are reminded about health and safety issues during lessons and because instances of bullying are rare. Satisfactory attention is paid to teaching pupils about healthy living. This is supported by the increased opportunities for physical education and sporting activities, and the school's strong message about healthy eating, although these aspects are not as strong as other areas of the curriculum. The school's policy and procedures for child protection are sound and members of staff have been trained to the required standards. Employment and staff vetting procedures meet requirements. Regular fire drills are carried out, and the inspection and testing of the fire alarm and emergency lighting are done within agreed timescales. There are appropriate systems for risk assessing educational visits and the recording of accidents and incidents. Nonetheless, there are some important maintenance issues that have not been addressed: these include missing protective covers on some fluorescent lights and some missing ceiling tiles.

## **SUITABILITY OF STAFF, SUPPLY STAFF AND PROPRIETORS**

The school has appropriate procedures in place for making the required checks on the proprietors, staff and volunteers. The single central register contains all of the required information.

## **PREMISES OF AND ACCOMMODATION AT THE SCHOOL**

The school is located in a former warehouse that also houses the local mosque. Although the accommodation is cramped, it has been appropriately adapted for educational use and is suitable for the current number of pupils. The proprietors

have recently installed new separate washroom cubicles for boys and girls. This has ensured that, overall, the school has sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils. While most of the classrooms do not have windows and no natural light, the artificial lighting is adequate for teaching purposes. The new ventilation system ensures that there is sufficient air circulating throughout the premises. The outside play space is quite small but adequate because only one class uses it at a time.

## **PROVISION OF INFORMATION**

The school provides suitable opportunities to consult with parents and carers twice per year. Parents and carers receive a written report twice each year which provides them with a clear overview of their child's progress. The school has recently updated its prospectus and it now fulfils all of the requirements.

## **MANNER IN WHICH COMPLAINTS ARE TO BE HANDLED**

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure which meets the requirements.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL COULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

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

- grasp opportunities to extend more able pupils and help them to attain the highest possible standards by teaching writing skills systematically across the school and providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
- ensure that all teaching is good or better by ensuring that assessment practice is always good by: making sure the school's assessment strategies are consistently applied; that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work; and that information about pupils' prior learning is used to plan work that meets their needs, particularly of those capable of reaching the highest levels
- make sure that teaching in all subjects is consistently good across the school.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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 pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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## SCHOOL DETAILS

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary		
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 2002		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6–11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 79	Girls: 73	152
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£2,100		
<b>Address of school</b>	472 Coventry Road, Small Heath, Birmingham B10 0UG		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 772 4567		
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:salafschool@gmail.com">salafschool@gmail.com</a>		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Cooper		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Abdul Wahid Alam		