

Jaamiatul Imaam Muhammad Zakaria

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	380/6109
Unique Reference Number (URN)	107460
Inspection number	364232
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Mohammad Ismail

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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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Jaamiatul Imaam Muhammad Zakaria School is an independent boarding school for Muslim girls aged from 11 to 21 years. The school was opened in 1992 and it is situated in the Clayton area of Bradford. There are currently 483 girls on roll and 105 girls are in the post-16 provision. The majority of students are British Muslims from a South Asian origin and none of them has a statement of special educational needs or is at the early stage of learning English. The school was last inspected in February 2008 and its boarding provision was inspected in March 2010. The school aims 'to provide a suitable environment for religious, educational and social development with commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.'

Evaluation of the school

The school meets its aims well by providing a good quality of education. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are outstanding. The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding and the school meets all the requirements for safeguarding. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection by enhancing the quality of education and the premises. The school meets all of the regulations for its registration as an independent school. The school is well aware of its strengths and of the areas which could be improved.

Quality of education

The school's curriculum is good. There is an appropriate curriculum policy in place which is supported by good quality schemes of work for all subjects. The curriculum provides for girls to become Muslim scholars and religious teachers and also prepares them for any further education they would like to pursue. There is a detailed programme of Islamic theology. The school's provision for *hadith* (the tradition of the Prophet), the Qur'anic studies, *fiqh*, (the practical aspects of Islamic life) and the Arabic language is outstanding. The programme also includes a good quality provision for Urdu.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection by upgrading its information and communication technology (ICT) provision. The quality of the provision for ICT and for basic skills is good. The provision for physical education is less strong but students have additional sporting opportunities during weekends. The school offers all subjects from the National Curriculum except music; instead, the school offers *nasheed* (Arabic and Islamic songs) and *tajweed* (Qur'anic recitation). The school offers an outstanding provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) in accordance with its Islamic ethos. The PSHE provision is effectively linked with the school's social, spiritual and care programme.

There is a good provision for careers advice which starts in Year 9. In Year 10 students go on work experience placements and last year had the opportunity to work in local Islamic supplementary schools. They receive regular visitors from different walks of life to talk to them about job opportunities in their organisations, for example, the police and hospital chaplains.

Support sessions are provided for students in need of extra help. The school offers extra-curricular activities, which include opportunities for religious discussion, cooking, mathematics booster classes, public speaking practice, a limited number of sporting activities and gardening. However, the school's programme of outings linked to its curriculum is more limited.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good which enables students to make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge in the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science and especially of the Islamic theology programme. Priority is given to teaching basic skills in English throughout many lessons. Teachers have high expectations of students to work hard. As a result, students are highly productive in all lessons and display exceptional behaviour and a strong work ethic. Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods so students learn to work independently as well as collaboratively. Relationships are excellent and students ask questions freely and participate fully.

Skilled questioning by teachers in lessons helps them to assess students' understanding well and students receive regular one-to-one verbal feedback on what they need to do to improve further. However, marking in books is inconsistent in quality; some is extremely informative and leads to students being able to improve their work but some marking is not up-to-date or is limited to mostly ticks and crosses.

Whole-school assessment systems have been developed since the last inspection so that individual student progress can be tracked and underachievement identified quickly. However, the monitoring of this data is not always sufficiently rigorous to enable senior staff to have a clear and up-to-date picture of each student's progress. The number of students attaining five GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics has increased and is above both the local norm and national average.

The students' progress in Islamic studies is good and is outstanding in some areas, such as *hadith*, *fiqh*, Qur'anic studies and in Arabic. All students successfully become scholars and teachers, and due to opportunities to also study some A levels such as Arabic, Urdu and mathematics, they progress to higher education after graduation.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school's provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their excellent attendance and their extremely good attitudes to learning show that they have a strong affiliation with their school and enjoy their education. Some students said 'they wish they could stay longer in their school' and others called the school 'sweet home'. They say 'the teachers are like our own mothers and sisters'. Their behaviour is outstanding which strongly reflects the school's Islamic spiritual ethos. There is a suitable rewards and sanctions policy which is effectively enforced in any case of unacceptable behaviour.

There is a detailed programme for school assemblies which is linked to the PSHE provision to help students to distinguish between right and wrong. Whole-school assemblies are held weekly during which students are encouraged to give speeches on different topics, for example, on the virtues of reading the Qur'an. In addition, they have opportunities to share their religious and spiritual learning with each other. The daily congregational prayers and individual supplications provide students with outstanding opportunities to promote their spiritual development. As a result, students are extremely polite and they courteously greet their teachers and visitors.

Students make an impressive contribution to the school, for example by working in the school's office with administrative tasks, in serving food, running the school's tuck shop and supporting new students. In addition, all students undertake daily boarding duties for their own dormitories. They vote to elect their representatives from each class for the students' council which helps them to understand democratic values. The council is very actively involved in making a good contribution to the school's day-to-day running. Sixth form students help in different sections of the school. The school has established very good links with local Muslim schools and with civic organisations such as the police and the local council.

The school through its good provision for literacy, numeracy, ICT, Islamic theology programme, good careers advice and its provision for work placements, prepares its students effectively for their future lives. Students learn about British history in English, general studies and citizenship lessons. For example, in a general studies lesson students were learning about women's contribution to the economic development of post-war Britain. The students are well aware of current affairs. They learn about other faiths and celebrate their own faith and respect others' views. They have made visits to a local church and representatives from other faiths come into school to talk to them.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for safeguarding the students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All students feel very safe. All the required policies and procedures are in place, including a safeguarding policy. All staff, including the school's designated child protection officer, are trained in child protection at the required level. There is a health and safety risk assessment policy which is effectively implemented. The school's educational visits policy is in place. There is a first aid policy and first aid officers are trained at the required level. The school has a fire risk assessment in place: all fire-fighting equipment is regularly tested and regular fire drills are conducted.

There is a healthy lifestyle policy and students are regularly informed about health-related issues and work in lessons is effectively linked with the school's curriculum. For example, in an Islamic theology lesson, the teacher linked the work with the National Health Service guidelines on health. The school's medical team regularly monitor students' health to help students maintain a healthy lifestyle and to advise them about health-related issues. This team also works closely with the catering staff to advise them about healthy food. As a result, the school provides students with a healthy diet and encourages them to eat fruit and vegetables at break time. Students take a morning walk in the school grounds. The school very effectively raises students' awareness about anti-smoking and drugs abuse.

The school has devised a three-year plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended. The school maintains attendance and admission registers which meets the regulations.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has undertaken all the required checks to ensure that its staff and the proprietor are suitable to work with children. The school maintains a single central register which meets the regulations.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's accommodation enables students to learn safely and effectively. There are sufficient classrooms, an ICT suite, two medical rooms, a science laboratory, a prayer hall, an assembly hall and a suitable outside space with a playground. The building is appropriately maintained and decorated. There are sufficient washroom facilities for the number of students on roll and for the staff.

Provision of information

The school meets all requirements by providing the necessary information to parents, carers and others through an up-to-date prospectus. The school reports on

students' progress bi-annually to parents, carers and others. Almost all parents expressed their support for the school in their responses to the questionnaire and in their personal letters to the inspectors.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a complaints policy and set of procedures, which meet all of the regulations. The school has taken steps to ensure that parents and carers are aware of these.

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:

- improve the provision for extra-curricular activities by providing more curriculum-related educational visits and a wider variety of sporting activities
- improve the quality and consistency of marking for all year groups
- ensure that information from the progress tracking system is more effectively monitored by the school's leaders.

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Muslim boarding school for girls		
Date school opened	1992		
Age range of pupils	11–21		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 483	Total: 483
Number of boarders	Boys: 0	Girls: 483	Total: 483
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (boarders)	£2,000		
Address of school	Thornton View Road Clayton Bradford West Yorkshire BD14 6JX		
Telephone number	01274 882007		
Email address	N/A		
Headteacher	Mrs Zebunnisa Hajee		
Proprietor	Board of Trustees		