

Al-Noor College

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Al-Noor College is a Muslim girls' secondary day school in Sparkhill, near to Birmingham city centre. It admits girls from 11 to 16 years of age. There are currently 10 students on roll, eight in Key Stage 3 and two in Key Stage 4. Most students are from Pakistani families. No students currently have a statement of special educational needs or are at the early stages of acquiring English. The school opened in 2008 and is located on the ground floor of a two storey building, adjacent to the Ameer-e-Millat mosque. The school has a governing body and provides a mix of Islamic and secular teaching. It aims to 'provide a happy and secure Islamic environment in which every student can discover and realise their full potential'. This is the school's first published inspection report.

Evaluation of the school

Al-Noor College provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is successful in meeting its stated aims and providing a friendly, family ethos due to the commitment of the headteacher, governors and staff. The curriculum, teaching and assessment are satisfactory and, as a consequence, students' progress in lessons and over time is satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. The welfare, health and safety of the students are satisfactory and safeguarding requirements are met. All except for two of the requirements for registration are met. All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were happy with their children's experience at the school.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of both the secular and Islamic curriculum is satisfactory. The school's curriculum policy sets out clear objectives for learning and is supported by appropriate schemes of work. The secular curriculum is broad and balanced, and takes account of National Curriculum expectations. Students are taught a suitable range of secular subjects at Key Stage 3, including English, mathematics, history, information and communication technology (ICT), citizenship, science, physical education (PE) and art. At Key Stage

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

4, students undertake GCSE courses in English, mathematics, additional science, Urdu, religious studies (Islam) and citizenship. Students in Years 9 and 10 also study ICT, PE and art. Curriculum resources for the teaching of practical science are limited. However, arrangements are in place for students to be taught practical science work at a partner Muslim girls' school nearby. In addition to the secular curriculum, all students follow courses in Arabic, Urdu, Quranic and Islamic studies. The Islamic curriculum is supported by detailed schemes of work, outlining key learning objectives, content and activities. Plans for the development of Quranic recitation skills are good and Urdu and Arabic are taught as modern foreign languages. Opportunities have been missed in the planning of both secular and Islamic subjects to include different learning objectives and activities for the range of students' abilities. As a result, students make satisfactory gains in their learning as they move through the school. Daily prayers are an integral part of the curriculum and make a good contribution to students' personal development. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) reflects the aims and ethos of the school and is taught through science, Islamic studies and citizenship lessons. The ICT curriculum is well resourced with a good number of computers and access to the internet. Students report that they particularly enjoy PE lessons but they do not currently have access to an outdoor play area. This limits the progress made by students in physical education. Students enjoy meeting visitors to the school and taking part in off-site visits to places of interest, such as Drayton Manor park and zoo. The school provides informal opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as booster classes. School staff provide informal careers advice and guidance for students. Work experience placements are at an early stage of development for Year 10 students.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Most students join the school with knowledge and skills at the expected level for their age. Work seen in students' books and discussions with them indicate that they are making satisfactory progress in their lessons and over time. Class sizes are small and teachers know their students very well. Lesson plans are satisfactory and most have clear learning objectives that are shared with the students. Although teachers give individual support during lessons, lesson plans do not routinely provide activities for different levels of ability and this limits students' progress. Students were observed making good progress in English and mathematics lessons. For example, in one mathematics lesson observed, the teacher fully engaged the students in learning about frequency diagrams. The teacher had good subject knowledge, checked students' learning regularly and used questioning effectively to assess how well students were doing. On occasion, there is too much direct teaching which limits opportunities for students to contribute fully to their learning. Relationships are good and students enjoy their lessons, demonstrating a positive attitude to learning. The school has a suitable assessment policy and framework that is satisfactorily implemented. The school provides an adequate range of resources to support learning. However, the range of books in the school library is limited. Assessments include regular tests and teacher assessments. Opportunities are often missed in lessons to check how well students are progressing through questioning, paired work and self-assessment. Students' books are generally

marked on a regular basis with positive comments which build their self-esteem. In the best examples of marking, students are provided with information to help them improve their work in English, but this is at an early stage of development across all subjects.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students report that they enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their satisfactory rates of attendance. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. In lessons, students settle quickly to their work and apply themselves well. In particular, students appreciate that their teachers provide a positive role model for Islamic life. These strong relationships have a positive impact on students' moral, social and spiritual development. Through the Islamic curriculum students develop a good understanding of what is right and wrong and learn about equality. Students have opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility as they undertake jobs such as monitors and raise funds for charities. Students report that they particularly enjoyed celebrating the Prophet's birthday (Milaad) with the local Muslim community and serving refreshments afterwards. The citizenship programme provides regular opportunities for students to learn about different faiths and cultures, as well as democracy, and public services and institutions in England. Students' cultural development is enhanced through programmes of study for history and art. For example, students were particularly proud of their recent work learning about Andy Warhol and pop art. Students' participation in daily prayers contributes strongly to their spiritual development. Steady progress in students' learning contributes satisfactorily to their future economic well-being.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Small class sizes and good staffing levels mean that students are well supervised at all times. The school complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended. Staff recruitment procedures follow guidelines and safeguarding requirements are met. Most staff and all members of the governing body have undergone enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to confirm their suitability to work with children and young people. The school is awaiting CRB clearances for three recently appointed part-time teachers. In the interim, the school has undertaken all the other checks required and ensures that these teachers are appropriately supervised. Satisfactory attention is given to health and safety through routine fire evacuations and checks on equipment. All staff have received suitable training in safeguarding. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and has received appropriate training at the higher level. The member of staff responsible for first aid has recently left the school. However, the headteacher has a good understanding of first aid procedures and has secured six places on a suitable training course for the end of May 2011. Students report that they feel safe in school, are treated with respect, bullying is very rare and any concerns are quickly

sorted out by staff. Parents and carers also report that they appreciate the safe, caring, friendly environment provided by the school. Students are encouraged to keep themselves healthy: they learn about solvents, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs which affect health. However, opportunities to take regular outdoor exercise are limited as there is no outdoor play area. During the inspection too many students were observed eating unhealthily. The school has collected comprehensive information about individual students when they join the school. However, the school does not have a suitable admissions register and therefore this regulation is not met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school complies fully with the regulations in respect of the checks made on prospective employees and others with regard to their identity and suitability to work with children and young people.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is located on the ground floor of a two storey building, adjacent to the Ameer-e-Millat mosque. The premises have been refurbished to provide appropriate internal teaching areas. Classrooms are a good size for the number of students on roll. There is a small ICT suite with access to the internet and a corridor library. In addition there is a good sized hall which is used for prayers, assemblies and as a dining area. There is also a second smaller hall which is used for indoor physical education lessons. The school does not have an outdoor area where students can undertake physical exercise or play, and therefore this regulation is not met.

Provision of information

The school has established good links with parents and carers. They are kept informed about their children's progress through regular parents' evenings and written reports. The most recent annual reports received by parents and carers summarise individual achievement, motivation, effort and examination results.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a fair complaints policy 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'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that there is an admission and attendance register which is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- ensure that lesson planning includes activities to meet the needs of students of all abilities
- ensure that teachers use a wider range of strategies to assess students' learning during lessons.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made

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 Girls' Day School		
Date school opened	2008		
Age range of pupils	11–16		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 10	Total: 10
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
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 (day pupils)	£1,500		
Address of school	21 Shakespeare Street, Sparkhill, Birmingham B11 4RU		
Telephone number	0121 772 0894		
Email address	alnoorcollege@live.co.uk		
Headteacher	Dr Ghazala Tallat		
Proprietor	Ameer-e-Millat Trust		