

Ebrahim Academy

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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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

Ebrahim Academy is a Muslim secondary school for boys situated in the heart of Whitechapel. It provides an education for boys between the ages of 11 and 14. Directly opposite the school building is a small college, Ebrahim College, specialising in post-16 education for Muslim boys and under the leadership and management of the same headteacher and proprietor as the Academy. The post-16 provision was not part of the current inspection. There are 24 students on roll, 14 in Year 7 and 10 in Year 8. Most students are of Bangladeshi heritage, while some are of Somali heritage. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs and none at an early stage of English language acquisition. Ebrahim Academy was registered in June 2010 and opened for students in September 2010. This is the school's first full inspection. Its aim is 'to educate students with the Islamic values and beliefs and provide an excellent academic foundation for students to advance according to the capabilities bestowed on them by Allah, to excel and achieve their career goals and live harmoniously within the wider community in the United Kingdom'.

Evaluation of the school

Ebrahim Academy provides a satisfactory quality of education and is making good progress towards fully meeting its aims at this relatively early stage in its development. Students make satisfactory progress as a result of the satisfactory curriculum and teaching. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and their behaviour is good. The arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are also satisfactory, including those for safeguarding. The staff are very committed to the cause of Muslim education and the school enjoys the support of its parents and carers. The school meets all but four of the regulations for independent schools.

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

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. A well-structured programme of *Tahfeez* (memorisation of the Qur'an) contributes over one third of total curriculum time and, along with Islamic studies, is provided every morning up until midday.

The curriculum taught in the afternoon covers Arabic as a modern foreign language, English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), geography, history and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). The school has ensured adequate curriculum coverage by significantly extending the school day.

The Islamic studies programme comprises *Aqaaid* (Islamic beliefs), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Tareekh* (Islamic history) and *Akhlaaq* (Islamic morals and etiquette). The curriculum is supported by satisfactory schemes of work, although these are of variable quality. The curriculum is not enhanced by educational visits or the provision of clubs and activities to enrich students' experiences. The school makes good use of the local sports area for physical exercise during the lunch break and for its regular physical education programme. Curriculum plans are already in place for the programme that is likely to be offered at Key Stage 4 in 2012.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Most lessons have a clear structure, which is reflected in teachers' day-to-day planning. Learning objectives are communicated to students, although these sometimes focus on what students are required to do rather than what they are expected to learn. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to assess students' progress accurately and securely during the lesson. Where teachers use questioning effectively, students make good progress, for example in a Year 8 science lesson where students deepened their knowledge and understanding of the structure and function of the heart through a stimulating practical task supported by well-targeted questioning. However, not all teachers ask probing questions to extend students' thinking and responses. There is insufficient good teaching because most teachers rely too heavily on textbooks, worksheets and teacher exposition, making learning insufficiently interactive. Nevertheless, students show good attitudes to learning and make satisfactory progress overall. Students make very good progress in *Tahfeez* lessons because of their enhanced focus and concentration, coupled with sharp tracking of progress against their challenging targets.

The school now assesses students regularly, using National Curriculum assessment criteria provided in commercial schemes of work for English, mathematics and the humanities. Levels of attainment in these subjects are beginning to be assessed accurately although the school recognises they could be even sharper. Progress tracking sheets are completed and evaluated each term. However, teachers do not always use the information to match work closely to the differing needs of students in lessons, particularly for less-able and more-able. Students are not given subject-

related learning targets and are not informed, by teachers' marking of their exercise books, how they can improve their work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is satisfactory. The daily teaching of different strands of Islamic studies, coupled with putting into practice what they have learnt, ensures that students' moral and spiritual development is strong. The outcome of this is care and consideration for each other and for staff, as well as students' good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Positive relationships with their teachers help to develop students' confidence and self-esteem. However, students have insufficient opportunities in lessons to work collaboratively, or to share ideas and opinions through structured learning conversations. As a result, students' social development is no more than satisfactory. Students enjoy the occasional opportunity to work in pairs, as they did in a science investigation and when perfecting their jujitsu skills during a PE session.

Students develop appropriate skills in English, mathematics and ICT to help them to prepare for the next stage of their education and for their future economic well-being.

Most students attend school regularly but are given insufficient opportunities to make a positive contribution to their school and the community. For example, students do not have monitoring roles and there is no school council to collate students' thoughts, views and ideas and channel these in a structured way to the school's senior leaders. One notable exception to this is leading the midday prayer, which the assigned students do very confidently and competently.

Tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions are promoted primarily through the school's weekly PSHCE programme. This programme has successfully raised students' awareness and knowledge of the key public services and institutions in the United Kingdom. However, students have not had the opportunity to meet and share ideas and views with others from different cultural backgrounds and faiths in order to develop their knowledge and understanding more fully.

Welfare, health and safety of students

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school takes good care of its students, both on- and off-site; for example, there is good supervision when students go to the local sports area during their daily lunch break. All of the required policies are in place and they take account of the latest national guidance. Strong relationships between teachers and students help to maintain a calm atmosphere and the students confirm that they feel safe in school. They all agree that the school helps them to be healthy, demonstrating this by eating healthy meals at lunch time and by taking daily physical exercise at the local sports area.

For the most part, there are sound policies, procedures and systems in place to safeguard students. Staff are trained to an appropriate standard, depending on their responsibility, in child protection. Regular servicing of electrical and fire fighting equipment and routine risk assessments contribute to maintaining a safe working environment. The admissions register is correctly maintained and there is a daily attendance register but this is completed only in the mornings. However, students are not at risk as there are frequent headcounts. A three-year accessibility plan ensures that the school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Checks on all staff, including Criminal Records Bureau checks, are carried out prior to their appointment. These arrangements meet the requirements and include the maintenance of a fully completed single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises provide a safe and effective educational environment and meet all requirements. Students use the laboratory facilities in Ebrahim College directly opposite the school when conducting science investigations or when working on laptops as part of ICT.

There are sufficient classrooms of adequate size for the registered number of students. They are light and well ventilated. Soft carpeting throughout is mostly in a good condition, as is the general state of repair and decoration. There are appropriate facilities for students who are ill and sufficient washrooms for staff and students. There is no outdoor play area, but the school makes good use of a local hard-surfaced sports ground where students play football and basketball during their daily lunch break.

Provision of information

A detailed handbook gives parents and carers all the up-to-date and accurate information that the school is required to provide. This is supplemented by a useful prospectus, aimed primarily at prospective parents. The handbook highlights the additional policies and procedures that parents and carers can request to see. In addition, a school website is in the process of being developed. Most parents and carers responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. There is a high level of support for the school and for what it provides. There is a concern by parents and carers, however, that students have not had the opportunity to develop the wider skills they need for the future through trips, excursions and extra-curricular activities.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet all 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 the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that all teaching involves well-planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and appropriate management of class time (paragraph 3(c))
- ensure that all teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3(d))
- establish a framework to assess students’ work regularly and thoroughly, and use the information from such assessment to plan teaching so that students can make maximum progress (paragraph 3(g)).

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

- ensure that the attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

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 consistency in curriculum planning so that all subjects have good schemes of work modelled on the existing best practice
- ensure that teachers consistently communicate sharp and succinct learning intentions to their students in all their lessons and use these to assess the level and depth of progress
- enhance the curriculum by providing educational visits or the provision of clubs and activities to enrich students’ experiences
- provide opportunities for students to work together and to make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/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 secondary school		
Date school opened	September 2010		
Age range of students	11–14 years		
Gender of students	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 24	Girls: 0	Total: 24
Number on roll (part-time students)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of students with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of students who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day students)	£2,400		
Address of school	80 Greenfield Road, London, E1 1EJ		
Telephone number	020 75391582		
Email address	info@ebrahimacademy.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mr A Patel		
Proprietor	Mr Mushfique Uddin		