

# The School of the Islamic Republic of Iran

100 Carlton Vale, London, NW6 5HE

## Inspection dates

16–18 April 2013

## Overall effectiveness

**Adequate** **3**

Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### This school is adequate because

- Achievement is adequate overall but it is inconsistent between subjects. For instance, it is better in Farsi and mathematics than it is in English.
- Not all staff have been sufficiently well trained in the teaching of phonics, reading and writing in English.
- Teaching is adequate but of variable quality. Teachers do not always take sufficient account of pupils' prior learning when planning lessons especially in English. Next steps for improvement are not always clear in teachers' marking to help pupils achieve their targets.
- While pupils are involved in the local community by taking part in visiting non-Muslim places of worship and local homes for the elderly, they nevertheless make little contribution to the wider community.
- Leaders have improved teaching and achievement and the school now meets all regulations. However, self-evaluation is not fully effective; the school development plan is not yet complete.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in Farsi (Persian) reading, writing and speaking skills and mathematics. Islamic studies are a strength.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are keen to learn and respect each other and the adults who support them. They feel safe and secure and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall and it makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils from a variety of different nationalities and cultures get on well with each other and racial harmony is good.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

### **Information about this inspection**

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed 12 lessons taught by five different teachers, looked at pupils' work, and held meetings with the proprietor, staff and pupils.
- The school's documentation was examined, including policies, schemes of work, teachers' planning, assessment records and records about behaviour and safety.
- There were no views of parents or carers registered on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for the inspector to take into account, although seven parents and carers sent written comments. The inspector scrutinised five questionnaires completed by staff.

### **Inspection team**

Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The School of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a small independent mixed Muslim school located in Maida Vale, in the London Borough of Brent. It opened in 2001 and is registered for 60 pupils aged from six to 17 years of age.
- The Iranian National Curriculum is taught in Farsi (Persian).
- There are currently 26 pupils on roll between the ages of six and 13 years of age. None has a statement of special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection, a high number of pupils have left due to the closure of the Iranian Embassy. There are no Year 1 and Year 4 classes due to insufficient numbers of pupils.
- Pupils have a diverse cultural heritage and all speak English as an additional language.
- The school seeks to help the pupils achieve an understanding of their Muslim faith and culture, and to study the Iranian curriculum, as well as Arabic and the Qur'an, as many of the pupils will return to Iran to complete their education.
- The proprietor is the Iranian Government Education Department.
- The school was last inspected in January 2010. Since then the school has had three monitoring visits.
- The school does not use any alternative off-site provision.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so as to raise attainment, especially in English, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers make better use of information about pupils' prior knowledge and levels of ability to consistently plan work which meets all pupils' needs
  - making sure that staff are suitably trained in the teaching of phonics, reading and writing in English
  - ensuring teachers' marking refers to pupils next steps for improvement so pupils are aware of how to achieve their targets.
- Further enrich students' experiences by improving links with, and pupils' contribution to, the wider community.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - improving the quality and effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation
  - completing and implementing the school's development plan, making sure that it focuses sharply on ways to improve pupils' progress and attainment.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Adequate

Pupils' achievement, including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is adequate overall. While pupils' progress is good in reading, writing and speaking in Farsi and mathematics, it is only adequate in reading, writing, speaking and listening in English. Although spelling activities are taught daily, phonics is not taught well enough to accelerate pupils' reading and writing skills at a good rate, especially for younger pupils. The progress made in the reading of the Qur'an is good and standards are above average. Achievement in Arabic is good. Pupils' attainment is adequate in secular subjects, although some higher-ability pupils do well, especially in Farsi and mathematics. This is as a result of small classes and one-to-one support by the teacher.

Pupils' work in books since the beginning of this academic year shows that pupils are doing work which builds more carefully on their previous learning, particularly in Farsi and mathematics. Older pupils make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to improve their Farsi and mathematical skills. They use the internet as a tool to further enhance their research experience.

Recent assessment results indicate that pupils' progress is adequate overall but improving in all subjects, including writing. First-hand evidence shows that pupils are making better progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, than at the time of the previous inspection. A few pupils who have taken GCSE examinations in Farsi and mathematics have achieved outstanding results.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. Pupils show a positive attitude towards learning, behave well and respect each other and the adults who teach them. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and relationships between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, are good. Pupils say that there is no racism and that bullying is rare. They know the different forms that bullying can take and know how to keep themselves safe from danger. For example, they have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet. Provision is not outstanding because on a few occasions the pupils have to be reminded to follow the rules about best behaviour and for a small number of pupils, attendance and punctuality are adequate, not good. Individuals appreciate the personalised support they receive during the day. The proprietor has ensured that where political issues are brought to the attention of the pupils, steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils start the day with reading of the Qur'an and *du'a* (supplication) in the assembly and reciting the Iranian national anthem. During lunchtime, older pupils enjoy spending time in *Zuhr salah* (lunchtime prayer). They engage fully in Islamic studies and in learning some *surah* (chapters) from the Qur'an, Hadith (Prophet's life), *Tafseer* (meaning of surah) and some basic *Fiqh* (Islamic law).

Islamic study successfully boosts pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence and prepares them well for life in the Muslim community. They acquire an appreciation and understanding of other faiths by visiting local places of worship, for example a Hindu temple and the local church. These learning activities help the pupils to gain a good knowledge and understanding of other cultures in a way that promotes understanding and harmony. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme helps pupils gain a more secure understanding of modern democratic British society and the institutions within it. They make a termly visit to a local centre for the elderly to talk to older people and give them some company. Visitors are also invited to talk to pupils, for

example, from the fire and police services. Pupils visit various public institutions such as natural and science museums and the local library. They have visited a recycling and paper factory. This ensures that they are developing an understanding of English public institutions and appreciation of the environment. However, opportunities for pupils to contribute to, and make a difference in, the wider community are too limited.

### Quality of teaching

### Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate overall and this means that pupils make adequate progress in learning over time, particularly in English. Teaching is not good because teaching is inconsistent in the way it helps pupils to achieve and so pupils do not make consistently good progress. For instance, the quality of teaching is good in supporting reading, writing and speaking in Farsi and in mathematics but it is only adequate in supporting reading, writing, speaking and listening in English. It is also of good quality in the teaching of the Qur'an. However, on occasion, in all areas, the quality of teaching slips because the level of challenge for pupils is not always high enough, especially for younger pupils. On occasions, staff do not always take sufficient account of individuals' previous attainment to ensure all of the activities provided give a good level of challenge and match the pupils' different needs.

Nevertheless, there have been improvements in teaching. Staff are keen that pupils do well and pupils are set appropriate targets to move learning on in both secular and Islamic work. Behaviour management is good and lessons are conducted in a positive climate. Time is generally used wisely and suitable individual support is provided where relevant. Pupils' speaking and listening skills in Farsi are a strength and plenty of opportunities are provided to get individuals to express their views and to comment on things in Farsi. The pupils are actively encouraged to engage in discussions in class. As a result, they are confident enough to express their own ideas to others well.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is more effective than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have regular opportunities to read in class and individually and many read well. The school knows that it needs to improve pupils' writing skills in English and that the training of staff in the teaching of phonics, reading and writing in English has not been fully effective.

The use of assessment is adequate and improving in both secular and Islamic subjects. Staff are suitably assessing pupils' standards of work in Farsi, mathematics, science, design and technology and other subjects using Iranian assessment levels. This information is beginning to be used more regularly when planning lessons. Staff are good at providing feedback to the pupils on how well they are doing in a number of ways, such as spoken praise and correction of any incorrect responses. However, pupils are not given sufficient feedback on how to meet their targets through comments in their workbooks.

Since the previous inspection, resources have been increased, particularly the quantity and quality of practical resources and textbooks in Farsi, mathematics and Islamic studies. Pupils make effective use of computers and their mathematical skills, for example by using internet research, producing bar charts and by preparing presentations and finding the different prices of oil as part of ICT projects.

### Quality of curriculum

### Adequate

The curriculum is adequate and enables pupils to achieve adequately. All of the required areas of learning are covered and the curriculum policy provides a fair and accurate summary of the secular and Islamic curricula. Short-term planning is based on simple daily lesson plans. As part of its ethos, work on the Qur'an, Islamic studies, *adab* and *akhlaaq* (manners and relationships) play a very important role in developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development,

especially when linked with PSHE studies. Provision for ICT is good and teachers and pupils make effective use of resources such as computers and software to support learning. The school provides an adequate physical education programme. Older students study GCSEs and GCE A levels in Farsi and mathematics.

The provision of careers advice has improved since the last inspection and is adequate. Students have the opportunity to undertake work experience linked to their specific needs and aspirations, for example in a paper factory. However, pupils usually go back to Iran for further studies and career opportunities. Adequate extra-curricular and additional learning opportunities are provided that enrich learning, for example, with sports links with local schools and visits to local parks in connection with history and geography. Pupils have opportunities to enjoy practical activities such as planting flowers. As a result, they learn the necessary skills for working independently and improve their learning environment.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

### **Adequate**

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is adequate. The independent school standards are met. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Procedures have improved from the time of the previous inspection. Effective child protection training is in place for all staff, including the designated child protection officers and appropriate arrangements are in place for further refresher training. A full range of policies is in place, including those for child protection and health and safety. All are understood by staff. An appropriate anti-bullying policy is in place and it is implemented effectively.

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure fire safety. A suitable fire risk assessment is routinely carried out and the outcomes of fire evacuations are formally recorded. All portable electrical equipment is subject to inspection by a competent person and suitable records are kept of the checks undertaken. Satisfactory risk assessments are carried out for educational activities off site.

Recruitment and staff vetting procedures comply with regulatory requirements. The single central register shows that all of the required checks have been appropriately carried out on all adults to confirm their suitability to work with children. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The admission and attendance registers meet the regulations.

First-aid procedures are implemented effectively. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of healthy lifestyles, particularly through physical education and on eating healthy food during break times.

### **Leadership and management**

### **Adequate**

Leadership and management are adequate. Since the previous inspection, leaders have undertaken the necessary improvements to ensure that all of the regulatory requirements for independent schools are met. The quality of provision has improved since the previous inspection, but most outcomes are adequate rather than good. The quality of teaching is not ensuring pupils make consistently good gains in learning in all of the subjects taught. This is why leadership and management are not yet good.

The proprietor and school leaders have an increasingly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and its overall provision and performance because monitoring of the school's provision is sharper. Consequently, leaders are clearer about what needs to be done to raise standards further. They are devising a school development plan to guide them through further essential changes and to provide a stronger basis for self-evaluation, but the draft plan, though adequate, is not yet good enough to raise standards quickly enough.

The proprietor has ensured that teaching staff are held to account for the progress that pupils make. They are now regularly tracking, monitoring and assessing pupils' progress through the use of the Iranian performance management system. As a result, targets are revised regularly to meet the needs of each pupil. The work to improve the quality of teaching and learning is paying dividends, but has not been fully effective in ensuring good progress is made across all subjects.

The proprietor has shown a strong commitment to improve the school's facilities. The premises and accommodation are adequate, and there is sufficient indoor space for teaching and learning and outdoor space for play and recreation. All of the required information is provided, or is made available, to parents, carers and others. The complaints procedure meets requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133385
<b>Inspection number</b>	402181
<b>DfE registration number</b>	3046079
<b>Type of school</b>	Islamic day school
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6–17 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	26
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Iranian Government Education Department
<b>Chair</b>	Not applicable
<b>Headteacher</b>	Seyed Abbas Hosseini
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27–28 January 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7372 8051
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:irischool@gmail.com">irischool@gmail.com</a>

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