

Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation

Lion House, Petersfield Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, SL2 5DN

Inspection dates

1 October 2014

Overall outcome

Independent school standards not met

Context of the inspection

- The school was last inspected in May 2013. It was judged to be a good school and met all the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended) required at that time.
- Following a review of the school's Halaqah curriculum, by the Department for Education, the school was served a notice by the Secretary of State on 29 January 2014. The curriculum evaluated at that time was available on the school's website and was dated 2005. Regulations under Part 2 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended) were deemed to have been not met.
- On the 21 March 2014, the school's action plan to address the weaknesses was evaluated as satisfactory, subject to satisfactory implementation.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection at the request of the regulatory authority to check implementation of the action plan approved in June 2014. The inspection was conducted using the amended standards for spiritual moral, social and cultural, published on 29 September 2014.
- The executive headteacher was on leave last academic year, for personal reasons. This has impacted on the leadership capacity to complete the action plan in the timescale agreed with Department for Education.
- A standard 162A inspection of the partner school, Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation Haringey, was undertaken at the same time. This drew on the school's resources to provide personnel and documentary evidence to the partner school.

Main findings

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

- In January 2014, the Department for Education wrote to the trustees expressing concern that the school did not meet paragraph 5(a), previously paragraph 5(a)(vi), of this standard. The curriculum failed to promote fundamental British values. Sections of the curriculum were considered to be promoting a political system that did not support the principles of British democracy. The aims and the objectives of the curriculum were not precise enough in teaching pupils to obey British laws.
- In its action plan, the school indicated that it would clarify the aims and objectives of the Halaqah curriculum with staff through training. The headteacher, along with staff, would revisit and revise sections of the Halaqah curriculum covering Islamic Law and Muslims in Britain. The unit on Muslim Spain would be developed to ensure it was clear that democracy is taught from a historical perspective.
- The curriculum is still being revised. A number of sections have still to be completed.
- The two curriculum sections on the Islamic Law and Muslims in Britain were completed within the time frame required by the regulating authority. The document contains considerable detail on the aims and objectives to underpin the themes taught each term. The themes themselves

provide a broad covering of topics relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. They demonstrate the intention to promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

- However, there is no mapping of the overall aims and objectives of the Halaqah curriculum to the topics and themes. What becomes quickly evident in the lessons observed is that teachers are not using the daily Halaqah (circle of learning) sessions to deepen pupils' thinking about British values, to help pupils connect these ideas and to relate them back to living in modern Britain.
- The school has designed a programme of topics that help underpin pupils' knowledge of political processes appropriate to the age of the pupils. Visits to the Houses of Parliament have helped pupils gain a perspective on the modern British political system. Contact with the local Member of Parliament, to enlist her help in tackling a local issue, is strengthening their knowledge of the working of democracy.
- More emphasis is now given to British history that helps underscore pupils' appreciation of how democracy works. Pupils' work books and photographic evidence of trips and visits illustrate that pupils are gaining a broad appreciation of modern British society and also its rich cultural diversity. Pupils are not guided to record their views on these experiences so that teachers can gauge the impact of their teaching.
- There has been a variety of trips, visits and visitors that broaden pupils' knowledge and breadth of understanding. This is particularly the case for historical studies. The curriculum has still to provide scope for pupils to learn more about other faiths and lifestyles and their contribution to contemporary British society.
- The headteacher is checking on the teaching of the Halaqah teaching. The observations are shared with teachers, but there is no guidance offered to staff on how they should improve the lesson to meet the stated aims relating to British values.
- Efforts have been made to strengthen links with other schools through community and public events. These are not enough to ensure the pupils come into regular contact with pupils of other faiths and cultural backgrounds.
- The school has a council at which pupils are encouraged to make representations to the headteacher and also to help in decision making. It is not an elected body, but it is helping them gain a working knowledge of how they can improve their school.
- There are still a number of examples where a one-dimensional view of the world is being given to pupils. There is very little in the displays in classrooms or in public spaces that balances the Muslim message with complementary views of other faiths and cultures.
- The implementation of the aims and objectives of the Halaqah curriculum is inconsistent, so requirements are still not met.
- In January 2014 the Department for Education wrote to the school expressing concern that the school did not meet paragraph 5(b)(ii), previously paragraph 5(a)(ii). There was concern that the Ahkam Shariah section of the curriculum may be misinterpreted to suggest that Allah's law is superior to civil and criminal law and pupils would be taught this. In its action plan, the school indicated that it would revise this section of the Halaqah curriculum. This has been completed.
- The school is enabling pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England. Pupils have a good knowledge of the rules that help them behave well in and outside their classrooms. They have contributed to these and this helps them to obey them.
- The daily Halaqah (circle of learning) sessions help pupils develop an understanding of right and wrong behaviour that is rooted in their knowledge of Ahkam Shariah. The curriculum has been adjusted to ensure that pupils are taught about the British justice system and distinguish between the civil and criminal law of the land and religious law.
- A programme of visits and visitors is ensuring that pupils are acquiring an understanding of the role of elected representatives in designing civil and criminal law and protecting the rights of individuals.
- The message from the many aims and objectives listed in Muslims in Britain and Islamic Law strands is that pupils are taught to live by Muslim law and respect the law of the land. The

message is that the pupils are taught to obey the laws of British society as part of their duty to be a good citizen. These requirements are now met.

- In January 2014, the Department for Education wrote to the school expressing concern that the school did not meet paragraph 5(c), previously paragraph 5(b). The trustees were failing to ensure that there was no teaching of partisan political views or attempt to indoctrinate the pupils. In its action plan, the school indicated that it would help teachers understand the requirements of this standard. A programme of lesson observations would be carried out.
- As a result of implementing its action plan, the school now has a regular programme of observing the teaching of Halaqah curriculum. In addition, there has been professional development for all staff on how to manage the oral discussion held in class to ensure no undue bias when responding to pupils. This is underpinned by a school policy that is understood by staff. It is evident that pupils are comfortable with teachers in expressing their views. The policy is in place and requirements are now met.
- In January 2014 the Department for Education wrote to the school expressing concern that the school did not meet paragraph 5(d)(i), previously paragraph 5(c)(i). The curriculum appeared to be biased in its presentation of Khilafah and in defining an Islamic state as superior to other forms of democracy, including British democracy. In its action plan, the school indicated that it would completely overhaul the curriculum in order to meet Part 2 of the standards.
- There remains a concern that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils they are not given opportunity to discuss these and form their own views based on hearing those of others. There is some confusion amongst staff about how contentious and contemporary topics are to be managed during the Halaqah discussion time. Staff take the view that if questions arise about events pupils have seen on the news or other media then they would be discussed. However, there is no explicit guidance provided that would ensure a balanced view is struck. Teachers are unsure how to manage views that may run counter to those of the school's stated aims. The absence of such guidance opens the potential for sectarian views to fill the void.
- The requirements are still not met.

The school must take action to meet 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.

Actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Paragraph 5(a)

Take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils while they are in attendance at the school that they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views. Paragraph 5(d)(i)

Inspection team

Jonathan Palk, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- The Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation primary school was opened in 2002 in central Slough. It has a partner school in Haringey with which it shares its senior management team.
- There are 122 pupils on roll aged from three to 11 years. Twenty four pupils attend part time in the Tifly nursery.
- The school has an Islamic ethos, reflecting the principles of Shakhshiyah education which underpins its curriculum and teaching approaches.
- The school aims to develop 'each child's Islamic personality in partnership with parents' and for children to '... reach a high level of academic achievement'.
- A very small number of pupils have special educational needs. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

School details

Unique reference number	134085
Inspection number	451142
DfE registration number	871/6003

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Muslim Faith School
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Number of part time pupils	24
Proprietor	The Trustees
Chair	Vacancy
Headteacher	Tahreem Sabir
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,700–£3,360
Telephone number	01753 518000
Email address	mail_slough@isfnet.org.uk

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