

Al-Muntada Islamic School

7 Bridges Place

Off Parsons Green Lane

London SW6 4HW

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Information about the school

Name of the school:	Al-Muntada Islamic School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Independent
Association membership:	Muslim Schools Association
Age-range of pupils:	3-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll	198 (all full-time, no boarders)
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	0
Number of pupils with English as an additional language:	109
Termly fees:	£550
School address:	7 Bridges Place, Off Parsons Green Lane, London SW6 4HW
Telephone number:	020-7471-8283
Fax number:	020-7371-7318
Headteacher:	Mr Z Chehimi
Proprietor:	Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust

Chair of the governing body:	Mr Abdul Fatah Said
DfES number:	205/6382
Reporting Inspector:	Roy Long HMI
Dates of inspection:	5-7 February 2002

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Scope and purpose of the inspection

This inspection was carried out in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills of the school's suitability for registration under the Education Act 1996. The report concentrates on those aspects of the school relevant to that purpose.

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), with the assistance of a specialist in Arabic who is a native Arabic speaker. All aspects of the school were inspected, but only English, mathematics and science are reported on in detail. Standards in other subjects are discussed in the section on the school's results and achievements. HMI visited 39 lessons or parts of lessons, had extensive discussions with the pupils and teachers, with the headteacher and with the manager of the centre in which the school is accommodated.

Information about the school

Al-Muntada Islamic school is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 3-11. It is situated in the Parsons Green area of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, but draws its pupils from a wide area of Greater London and beyond. It is housed in an educational and social centre owned by the Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust, which is a Muslim welfare and educational organisation specialising in welfare work and which maintains schools in several different countries. It has 198 pupils on roll, none of whom are identified as having special educational needs, over half the pupils (109) have English as an additional language. The school has no public funding and is entirely dependent on fees and voluntary contributions.

The school has a prospectus which clearly states its aims and objectives. These are:

- to provide its pupils with an Islamic environment where they can receive a high standard of elementary education with Islamic input and knowledge about their religion and way of life;
- within a strong Islamic ethos to aim sensitively at developing children with good moral values and character so that they may actively become responsible young people within the community and outside.

It draws its pupils from more than ten different nationalities, only a small number of which have Arabic as a first language.

MAIN FINDINGS

How good the school is

Since it was established in 1989, Al-Muntada Islamic School has made slow, but steady, progress and is now providing a sound and satisfactory education for its pupils, and is fulfilling the aims and objectives set out in its prospectus.

What the school does well

- The school is very successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, within an Islamic ethos; It gives pupils a strong sense of belonging to the world wide Islamic community, irrespective of ethnic, national, or linguistic differences.
- It provides a sound and satisfactory general education for its pupils, lays down a good educational basis in the foundation stage, has high expectations of its pupils, and generally enables them to reach satisfactory or good levels of attainment.
- It provides generally satisfactory or good teaching and deploys its teaching assistants well and it is very supportive of teachers' in-service training and professional development.
- It provides good pastoral care and is concerned for the welfare of its pupils.
- It enjoys strong support from the parents of its pupils and communicates with them effectively.
- The school is an orderly community which has well established and well understood routines which enable it to function well on a day-to-day basis.

What could be improved

- At present there is no central planning of the curriculum and no schemes of work to help continuity and progression.
- The school does not analyse test results in a systematic way so as to help planning of teaching and learning.
- The school has been very supportive of teachers' in-service training and professional development, but this has not been sufficiently systematic.
- It has had poor provision for information and communication technology (ICT), although there are strong indications that this weakness is about to be remedied.
- Although the school is a well ordered community, there is a minority of pupils, mainly boys, who behave poorly.
- The school has a child protection policy, but teachers and helpers need training to understand the procedures involved.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

This is the first time that the school has had an inspection leading to a published report, but since its establishment in 1989 it has had four visits in connection with its suitability for registration as an independent school. The last of these was in June

1998, since which time it has made some improvements to the accommodation, has introduced more history into the curriculum, appointed subject co-ordinators, and has introduced a child protection policy. HMI have noted slow but steady progress since the school was established.

Standards

The school has begun to make use of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, although it does not make sufficient use of these for purposes of analysis and planning. At age 11, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations in English, but below those in mathematics and science, although there is a discrepancy between national test results in these subjects and the work seen in the classroom. Pupils reach satisfactory standards in other subjects. Standards in Arabic and Islamic education are good.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	11	15	26
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100	100	100	
	National	84	86	91	

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	7	9	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	73.7	62.5	68
	National	75	71	87

Pupils' attitudes and learning

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Most pupils show good attitudes to the school and have a positive approach to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is usually very good, but is sometimes spoiled by a small number of pupils, mostly boys, who display negative, and occasionally aggressive, behaviour to other pupils and to teachers.
Personal development and relationships	In all areas of teaching, but particularly effectively in its Islamic education programme, the school pays special attention to developing positive character traits; personal relationships are generally good.
Attendance	Good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching of pupils	Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Lessons seen overall	5	14	20

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching and learning is patchy. Most of it is satisfactory, and sometimes good or very good, but a minority of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory. Of the 39 lessons or parts of lessons observed by HMI, eight per cent were judged very good, 42 per cent good, 37 per cent satisfactory, and 13 per cent unsatisfactory.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The balance between religious and secular subjects is good and there are strong links between the two. However, Information and Communication Technology is weak and the school has no music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There are no statemented pupils, but a number of pupils who have distinctive educational needs, including lack of fluency in English, need more specialised attention. The school does not have a special needs register and it does not follow the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.
Provision for pupils' personal, including	The school does not have discrete lessons in personal, social and health education, but elements of these are present in both

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	secular and Islamic lessons, and the school has made good use of outside speakers. The school succeeds very well in making pupils aware of their membership of the worldwide Islamic community, while, at the same time, teaching respect for other faiths.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a strong feature of the school and staff are concerned for pupils' welfare. However, teachers need to be more aware of the details of the school's child protection policy.

How well the school is led and managed

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall management of the school is good, but more attention needs to be given to management of the whole school curriculum and to developing the role of the subject co-ordinators.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has no mechanisms for evaluating its performance and there is, as yet, no whole school procedure for effectively analysing pupils' results in national tests.
The strategic use of resources	Resources across the school are satisfactory, except, until very recently, in ICT.

The school meets the requirements for registration as an independent school according to the Education Act 1996.

Parents' and carers' views of the school

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children like school • pupils make good progress • behaviour is good • pupils get an appropriate amount of work to do at home • good teaching • they are kept well informed • the school is approachable • expectations are good • the school is well managed • the school helps to develop children's maturity and responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parental involvement in the school committee • better provision of extra-curricular activities.

KEY ISSUES

What could be improved

In order to improve further, the school needs to:

- strengthen planning of the whole school curriculum. (39, 40)
- develop the analysis of the range of assessment data available and use this to set targets for pupils. (37)
- develop training in a more systematic way in order to raise standards further. (56)
- provide training in the area of child protection. (48)
- develop its ICT provision and its use across the curriculum. (39)
- plan effective procedures for dealing with the minority of badly behaved pupils. (24)
- introduce a systematic approach to the assessment of and provision for special educational needs. (22)
- look carefully at the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. (37, 51)

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the school's action plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Al-Muntada School is an Islamic school which has as one of its declared aims the provision of an Islamic education alongside a more general education. Twenty six per cent of teaching time is allocated to subjects which might broadly be termed Islamic, namely Islamic Education (six per cent), Qur'an (nine per cent) and Arabic (11 per cent).

The teaching of Islamic Education covers the fundamentals of the faith. In addition, pupils are introduced to ethical and behavioural expectations and social and family values. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to state their beliefs in simple terms and explain what they mean to them personally.

Arabic is taught throughout the school, and all pupils, irrespective of age, receive 2 hours 40 minutes of teaching a week. Bearing in mind that eight per cent of pupils do not have Arabic as a mother tongue, levels of attainment are good and standards are high. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are familiar with daily language and most are able to speak with good pronunciation. This is particularly commendable when it is remembered that most pupils have very few opportunities to speak the language outside the context of the classroom.

The nursery class was established in September 2001. The school does not as yet use the national early learning goals to assess children's progress and attainment in the

Reception Year, but plans to do so now that the Foundation Stage covers the three to five age range.

Children's attainment on entering school appears to be in line with national expectations, except in English where two-thirds of the pupils in the present nursery class have English as a second or third language.

In the national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' attainment in English was in line with the national average. Standards in reading are much higher than those for writing. This reflects the national pattern. Attainment in both mathematics and science is lower than the national average. Written feedback from the external marker indicates that the science results are adversely affected by pupils' misunderstanding of some of the technical vocabulary. The quality of work seen during the inspection indicates pupils' attainment in both mathematics and science is in line with national expectations across Key Stage 2.

National tests were taken for the first time in 2001. Inspectors found that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are working at average standards in English, mathematics and science. The quality and quantity of work in their books show that pupils have made good progress since the start of the school year in these subjects. Standards in art and design, history and geography meet national expectations. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in ITC and in physical education.

Standards in reading are good throughout the school except for a small number of pupils who are poor readers. These pupils do not receive enough support to enable them to make good progress. Standards in writing are good for girls but lower for boys, and some of the written work in exercise books is poorly presented. On the other hand, some boys and girls pay careful attention to the way in which they present project work, and inspectors saw some examples of high quality work.

Girls out-perform boys in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 they out-perform boys in reading, but particularly in writing where there is a 35 per cent difference in national test performance. In Key Stage 2 in both mathematics and science, boys out-perform girls.

History and geography are taught in all classes and standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations. The school follows the National Curriculum programme of study for both subjects and some use is made of the schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The paucity of resources hinders the full development of pupils' historical understanding and pupils have few opportunities to study artefacts and primary sources of evidence. However, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the periods they have studied and a sense of chronology. Good use is made of television programmes and the accompanying teachers' packs to develop pupils' understanding of the past.

Considerable attention is paid in geography teaching to develop pupils' understanding of place and changes and development in the environment. Pupils use the locality as a focus for their work, as, for example, in a recent visit to the nearby underground

station to study changes in transport. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment in geography are in line with national expectations.

Targets are now being set for whole classes and for individual pupils. The targets are suitably challenging. Staff development needs to be focused on those aspects of learning which pupils find difficult and where they under-perform. Test results and pupils' written work need to be analysed more closely to identify more precisely those aspects of the subject which pupils find difficult.

In all classes, except for Arabic, pupils are set the same work. This does not allow those pupils who have difficulties with the subject nor those who are very able to work at a level commensurate with their abilities and thus achieve their full potential. No pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, but national test information and examination of pupils' books indicate that some pupils have special educational needs; some extra help is provided for them by class assistants and helpers from outside school, but this needs to be strengthened.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Most of the pupils have positive attitudes towards the school and they respond well to its caring and supportive ethos. They are encouraged by the good role models provided by staff, who seek to promote good behaviour and sound attitudes. This is reinforced by the teaching in the Islamic strand of the curriculum, which constantly links Qur'anic teaching with what are acceptable and unacceptable standards in attitude and behaviour.

Pupils are keen and eager to come to school and take an active part in what the school has to offer. Their behaviour is usually good, and sometimes very good, but there were some examples of poorer behaviour, both in classes and around school. Where there was poor behaviour in classes, it is sometimes because the teacher failed to establish a suitably disciplined start to the lesson. There were examples of inappropriate and occasionally aggressive behaviour by boys. Measures to combat this poor behaviour are inadequate.

The school does not have discrete lessons in personal, social and health education, but elements of these are clearly present in subjects in both the secular and Islamic strands of the curriculum, and the school has invited outside speakers in to discuss aspects of personal development with separate groups of boys and girls.

Attendance

The school maintains its admissions register in accordance with the current regulations. Attendance registers are marked for each session but in the morning the register is not marked until after the daily assembly. The attendance registers clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence, and there are well understood procedures by which parents are expected to inform the school of the reasons for absence. Attendance is satisfactory.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

The teaching at the school is not consistent in quality. There was more good teaching observed in English lessons than in any other subject, but there was also more variation in quality, with judgements ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. In Islamic subjects there is also wide variation in the quality of the teaching. Most lessons were satisfactory or good, but a small number were unsatisfactory. The one lesson to be graded very good was an Arabic lesson in the reception class. The most consistent teaching was found in mathematics, where all lessons were judged to be either satisfactory or good.

In the very good lesson the teachers have high expectations of what the teachers can achieve, there is a brisk pace, and good use is made of interesting resources. The teachers are skilled in questioning pupils to assess their understanding, and they move pupils' thinking forward within the lesson. For example, in a very good Year 6 English lesson on the use of the personal and impersonal voice, the teacher had chosen an interesting collection of stories, poems and leaflets to stimulate the pupils' interest. She used an overhead projector effectively to assess and extend pupils' ability to use the passive tense and kept up a brisk pace to her questioning. The questions increased in difficulty as she moved the pupils on in their understanding.

All the teachers of Arabic are native speakers. All of the teaching observed was satisfactory, and in most cases good. Teachers make good use of a variety of resources, including textbooks (some of which are religious), prompts, flashcards, and other interactive techniques. Many of these resources are ones that they have produced themselves. They establish a good atmosphere for teaching and learning and pupils generally respond well, sometimes with great enthusiasm. The target language is generally used throughout.

In a very good Arabic lesson in the reception class, several strong features were observed. The main aim of the lesson was to introduce a new sound and letter of the alphabet. The teacher spoke entirely in Arabic, the lesson was well paced and lively, with the children repeating the sounds after the teachers and taking turns to match the symbols to pictures and read objects such as a bar of chocolate and a cake. The children then practised copying the symbol and repeating the sound as they wrote. Throughout the lesson, the teacher spoke to them as a group and individually, requiring them to repeat what she had said, or answer questions. The children spoke entirely in Arabic, were highly motivated by the lesson, and behaved very well. The lesson lasted 45 minutes, which is a long time for young children, yet the teaching held their interest and they made very good progress.

In most of the lessons in Islamic Education the teaching was sound and sometimes good. Although the teacher expects children to memorise some Qur'anic passages, most of the teaching is practical and set in the context of situations that the children would easily recognise. The combination of a light-hearted approach with serious intent is much appreciated by the pupils, who respond well. However, there is some variation in the quality of the teaching. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were shown copies of braille editions of the Qur'an and they had to wrestle with the difficult concept of Arabic being transliterated into standard braille characters and decoded from left to right. This was a lively and stimulating lesson. Less successful was a Year 5 lesson in which the main resource used was a video on the hajj, where pupils had to contend with commentary that included sophisticated vocabulary.

Features of the weaker teaching observed include lack of subject knowledge by the teacher and consequent low expectations of what children can achieve in the subject, poor resources, and poor use of the time available. In unsatisfactory lesson in Year 1, the double period of 80 minutes was far too long for such young pupils. The use of poor quality and limited resources compounded the difficulties faced by the teacher in trying to keep the boys in particular interested. A wider range of resources would help to maintain pupils' interest. The school needs to review the length of lessons for younger pupils.

Overall, the proportion of weaker teaching is greater in Key Stage 1, where teachers make too much use of worksheets, which hinder the capacity of pupils to write in extended sentences and which sometimes include words that they cannot read.

Strengths of the teaching throughout the school include the emphasis placed upon the development of speaking and listening skills; the good deployment of teaching assistants; and individual projects set for pupils to undertake at home. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good; this is a direct result of the teaching, which encourages debate, allows pupils time to consider their responses, and requires them to listen. Some Key Stage 2 pupils undertake individual project work which they enjoy which and allows them to develop independent research skills. Teaching assistants ably support teachers and they work well as a team. They are well managed within the classrooms and make a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and regularly, but there is insufficient guidance for further improvement. Limited use is made of assessment and test results to inform target setting for individual pupils or to identify gaps in curriculum provision or areas of teaching that need to be improved.

Although teachers make weekly or termly plans for their year group, these plans are not co-ordinated at whole-school level. Consequently, the school has no policy or method for ensuring continuity of its provision and progression of learning for pupils across the school age ranges.

The school does not undertake baseline assessments with pupils on entry to the nursery or the reception class, and there is little analysis of national test results. There is, therefore, little evidence available to evaluate the progress made by pupils generally, or by specific groups. The school is aware that it has pupils with special educational needs, but has no policy for dealing with them. Similarly, although a large proportion of pupils have English as an additional language, no specific programme of support is available for them. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily, but the teaching of phonics is weak and written English is unsatisfactory, and generally poor presentation of work does not reflect the knowledge that pupils show when speaking in class.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

The School seeks to provide pupils with both a general and an Islamic education. What it provides is suitable for the children at the school, bearing in mind their age and gender. The general education, which takes up about 75 per cent of the week,

consists of English, mathematics, science, social studies (which includes elements of history and geography), art and craft, physical education, and ICT. The remaining 25 per cent of the timetable is taken up with Islamic education, which includes study of the Qur'an and of the history, beliefs, traditions and practices of Islam, and of Arabic, which is taught both as a modern foreign language and in order to provide access to the Qur'an. Although the National Curriculum is used as a broad guide in the planning of the general education programme, it is not followed in its entirety.

It is the school's intention to appoint a deputy head with responsibility for curriculum co-ordination, which is weak at present. Teachers plan their work for year groups well, but there is no overall planning for the whole school. The school makes some use of schemes of work produced by the QCA but continuity and progression are not assured sufficiently through school plans. The result of this is that planning is patchy, although there is good planning for English and mathematics in some specific year groups; the school needs to look at ways of disseminating this good practice more widely. The planning of Islamic studies, including Arabic, is generally sound. A weakness in the curriculum is in the area of ICT, the delivery of which has been seriously hampered by the lack of computers. This is now being rectified and during the week of the inspection the school took delivery of 15 new machines.

The time allocated to individual subjects is suitable and 46 per cent of curriculum time is given to English and mathematics. However, the school must give careful attention to the length of lessons, which are sometimes too long for pupils to give sustained attention. This is especially true for pupils in Key Stage 1, and in several lessons pupils grew bored and restless.

The school does not have discrete lessons in personal, social and health education, but elements of these are clearly present in subjects in both the secular and Islamic strands of the curriculum, and the school has invited in outside speakers to discuss aspects of personal development for separate groups of boys and girls.

The school offers a limited range of extra-curricular activities, including a netball club and a science club. At the end of the day there is an after-school club for pupils who are waiting to be collected by their parents, and this provides support for pupils to do homework or additional studies. The school does, however, provide opportunities for curriculum enrichment, and recent outside visits have included trips to the Science Museum in South Kensington, a study walk around the local environment, and a visit to the nearby underground station.

Girls and boys have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum, but there are a number of pupils for whom inadequate provision is made. The school does not have a defined approach to the assessment of pupils who may have special educational needs; it is aware of pupils who have such needs and gives some support through classroom assistants, but this support is not systematic or carefully planned. Likewise, the school is aware of the different languages spoken by pupils at home but has not done sufficient analysis to plan appropriate provision for those who may be experiencing difficulties, especially with written English and Arabic.

The school is particularly strong in cultivating some aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Islamic curriculum stresses the moral and ethical

dimensions of Islam, as well as practical aspects of religious observance, and in Islamic education lessons the teacher constantly relates the teachings of Islam to day-to-day life. The school has pupils from many different ethnic and national backgrounds. The school succeeds very well in making pupils aware of the way in which membership of the Islamic ummah transcends social, national, cultural, and linguistic differences, while, at the same time, teaching respect for other faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The general approach to pastoral care for pupils is good. Staff are concerned for the welfare of all pupils and respect the cultural differences within the faith. Some aspects of care are less well developed. Procedures for child protection are in place but staff are not sufficiently familiar with them. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance are developing. Behaviour in the school is generally good, except for a minority of boys who are badly behaved in the classroom and outside. Procedures for monitoring behaviour need to be improved.

Pupils receive support and guidance from staff. The procedures are informal, but pupils know that they can discuss personal concerns with staff and that they will be treated with respect and understanding. Staff are approachable and know their pupils well. For example, last year the Year 6 teacher recognised that the class as a whole would benefit from discussing personal health issues. She arranged this for the boys and girls in separate groups. This was followed up by the use of a visiting speaker who discussed issues such as peer pressure, the influence of the mass media, role models, and attitudes towards the other gender. Some of the issues were identified in advance by the class teacher, based on her knowledge and understanding of the pupils. Others were identified by the outside guest, based on her experience of working with young people and from eliciting from the pupils their concerns and hopes.

A good foundation for pupils' personal and social development is laid in the nursery and reception classes where the children are introduced to the routines of school life in a sensitive and caring way which builds up their confidence and sense of community.

The school has a child protection policy with a copy available to staff, but they have not been trained in its use and are not familiar with what the processes are. All staff understand the requirement to inform the headteacher if they are concerned about the welfare of any child but they are not aware of the requirement to keep written records. Procedures for checking the suitability of new staff comply with requirements.

Overall, procedures concerning health and safety are managed well. One potential hazard in the nursery seen during the inspection was immediately rectified. Because the nursery has only recently been established and the staff are inexperienced, the school needs to seek advice on safety issues.

The assessment of pupils' work and its use to plan future work is generally satisfactory. The school has introduced the optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5, and plans to use the results to track pupils' academic progress. To do this effectively, staff need to be trained in how to analyse assessment data and to record how different

groups of pupils perform. The school does not have a register of pupils with special educational needs and has no formal procedures for identifying who these children are or what their needs are. Special attention is needed for the assessment of progress in English for those for whom it is an additional language.

Children who have English as their second or third language do not always achieve their full potential and need extra support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are committed to it. A few travel considerable distances to bring their children. They value its distinctive Islamic ethos and particularly appreciate the teaching of Arabic. They feel comfortable approaching the school, believe their children are making good progress, feel well informed about their progress, and believe that they are kept up to date about school matters generally. A small number indicated that they would like to see more parental involvement in the school's committee.

The school has effective links with parents. Its prospectus is detailed and businesslike and the regular newsletters are informal and welcoming in style. Parents and carers receive three annual reports: one for Islamic subjects and one for the other subjects of the curriculum. Both are appropriate, although the reports on secular subjects are variable in quality and do not sufficiently highlight areas for further development. The better reports, such as those for upper Key Stage 2, reflect the teachers' detailed knowledge of the pupils and of their response to the subjects studied, rather than a general statement about topics covered. The school provides parents with the children's timetables and details of classroom routines. There are three open days when parents can discuss their children's progress with the class teacher.

They support fund-raising activities and many of the large play toys used by younger pupils have been donated by parents. A small number of parents work in the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Al-Muntada school is an orderly and well-run community. The headteacher is responsible for administering the school; he has very efficient office support and the day-to-day management is very effective. There is an advisory committee which includes the headteacher, two teachers, and the manager of the Al-Muntada Centre in which the school is situated. At present there are no parental representatives on this body, but plans are in hand to change this in the immediate future.

The school is well staffed, and, taken overall, teachers have a wide range of qualifications and experience. Only three members of staff have qualified teacher status, but the school has been very positive in supporting staff in pursuing professional development, and at present several of the teachers are engaged in further training. However, this has not been very systematic and the management needs to develop a more planned approach to training by analysing the needs of the school as a whole as well as those of individual teachers. None of the nursery staff are qualified

to teach early years, but they bring enthusiasm and flair to the task; classroom assistants are deployed very successfully in the nursery.

The school is housed in one self-contained wing of the Al-Muntada Islamic Centre in Parsons Green. The premises are suitable for use as a school and the accommodation has been refurbished and is well furnished; it provides a good environment for teaching and learning. Teachers and pupils value this environment, which is enhanced by good display throughout. The classrooms are adequate for the present number of children on roll, but the building lacks both a library and an adequate outside play area. The playground, which was a former car park, is partially covered, and is both narrow and sloping. The hall, which is used as a gymnasium, has to be used as a play area during breaks, but the current practice.

The school relies on fees and on support from the Al-Muntada Trust, and receives no public funding. Resources in Key Stages 1 and 2 are adequate and are well used to support the teaching and learning, but more resources need to be made available in the nursery, including the provision of large play equipment. Each classroom has collections of reading and reference books, and every class goes once a fortnight to the local public library, which is five minutes walk away. However, the school should now begin to develop a library of its own. Until now, ICT has been poorly provided.

At present, there is no deputy head, although it is anticipated that such an appointment will be made in the near future. Such an appointment might well include responsibility for the management and development of the whole curriculum, so that planning is more systematic and consistent.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve further, the school needs to:

- strengthen planning of the whole school curriculum; (39, 40)
- develop the analysis of the range of assessment data available and use this to set targets for pupils; (37)
- develop training in a more systematic way in order to raise standards further; (56)
- provide training in the area of child protection; (48)
- develop its ICT provision and its use across the curriculum; (39)
- plan effective procedures for dealing with the minority of badly behaved pupils; (24)
- introduce a systematic approach to the assessment of and provision for special educational needs; (22)
- look carefully at the needs of pupils learning English as a second language. (37, 51).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of inspection evidence

Information about the school's pupils

	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of full-time pupils	83	104	187
Number of part-time pupils	4	7	11
Total number of pupils	87	111	198

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils eligible for free school meals
109	0	Not applicable

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	3.9	School data	2.8

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Public funding of pupils

No pupil at the school receives public funding.

SURVEY OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	198
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

My child likes school.	89	11			
My child is making good progress in school.	86	14			
Behaviour in the school is good.	82	13	4		1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	72	27	1		
The teaching is good.	80	19	1		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	24	1		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	7	3		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	91	9			
The school works closely with parents.	70	25	5		
The school is well led and managed.	75	24	1		
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	18	1		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	34	19	5	14

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English are considerably above national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards of English overall are in line with national expectations. Standards are good in reading for both boys and girls and good in writing for girls, but the standard of boys' writing is below national expectations.

Many of the pupils have English as their second or third language and their attainment in English when they enter school reflect this. They make good progress during the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, especially in speaking, listening and reading. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to participate and respond eagerly. They generally focus on the task in hand, although the attention of some of the pupils wanes towards the end of lessons.

The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are conducted at a lively pace and time is used efficiently. Discussion and questioning feature strongly in the teaching and

pupils are suitably challenged. The Framework for the National Literacy Strategy is used by all teachers to guide their planning and teaching, and, in the best practice, to inform their assessment of pupils. However, there is some inconsistency in how teachers interpret the framework, particularly in the emphasis given to the teaching of phonics.

The Year 4 teacher has responsibility for co-ordinating the teaching of English across all classes. Resources for English are satisfactory, although at present there is little use of ICT. Displays within classrooms provide a stimulating literacy environment which supports pupils' learning.

In the nursery and reception classes, children are given extensive opportunities to express themselves, to discuss their own experiences and engage in role play. They do so with considerable enthusiasm and confidence. They learn to listen to others, wait their turn, and are given time to think about what they want to say. The emphasis on speaking and listening is continued as pupils progress through the school, and by Year 6 most pupils can articulate their points of view clearly and are keen to do so.

Attainment and progress in reading are good, particularly in Key Stage 1, where the standards are very high. The children learn to read from a range of different types of books. They are shown different strategies for reading, particularly the recognition of whole words. More attention needs to be given to the teaching of phonics to help children hear the separate sounds within words to improve their writing and spelling.

In Key Stage 2 pupils develop more advanced reading skills, including inference and deduction. Visits to the local library provide access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books to enable children to read for pleasure and information; this compensates in part for the lack of a school library. A small number of pupils do not learn to read fluently by the end of Key Stage 2. This adversely affects their performance in national tests, not only in English, but most notably in science. The specific learning needs of these pupils are not identified and they do not receive the support they need to improve. In Key Stage 2 pupils engage in a good balance of writing activities, including composition, comprehension and persuasive and evaluative writing. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and range of audiences. There is, however, a wide variation in the quality of the writing. At its best, the writing shows good mastery of sophisticated techniques. A significant minority of pupils do not express themselves clearly in writing and have poor spelling and handwriting. Teachers recognise the need to improve the quality of writing throughout the school, and plans are in hand for giving more time to the teaching of writing.

MATHEMATICS

Standards of attainment in mathematics in the Foundation Stage are good. The school is aware of the early learning goals and all the children are on line to meet national expectations in mathematics. Children make a good start in numbers in the Foundation Stage. They can recite in numbers to 10, count objects to 10, correctly form numerals, understand and use correct mathematical language such as bigger, small, near, far, heavy and light, and are beginning to form an understanding of the concepts of more than and less than.

Standards of attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 2001 national tests are above the national average, with all the pupils achieving Level 2B or above. 60 per cent of girls and 73 per cent for boys achieve Level 3. These are excellent results. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are working with hundreds, tens and units, have a rudimentary understanding of number place value; can add and subtract mentally with two digit numbers and explain how they did it; have experienced working with co-ordinates, make simply tally charts and graphs, and can measure using simple units. However, at the end of Key Stage 2, levels of attainment are below the national average with 63 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 or above. Boys out-perform girls with 71 per cent achieving Level 4, compared with 56 per cent of girls. However, the two level 5's were achieved by girls. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are working at or above the nationally expected levels. Most of the work is on number: percentages, decimals, fractions, and place values. Their knowledge of tables, factors, and square roots is good, and they have covered work in area, perimeter co-ordinates and two-dimensional shapes.

The work in books is poorly presented and of a limited range. It does not reflect the oral contributions pupils make in class and at Key Stage 2 does not reflect national test results. For these reasons it is difficult to identify particular groups of pupils for whom additional provision may be worthwhile. However, inspection findings indicate that the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged.

The quality of teaching in mathematics across the school is never less than satisfactory and is frequently good. The better teaching was seen in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2. Key features of the teaching include a three part-structure to the lesson such as that recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy, direct instruction and exposition by the teacher, and high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and the teacher's confidence in her own subject knowledge. Almost all of the good quality lessons in Year 6 contained these elements.

The management of the subject is still at an early stage of development. The school has recently appointed a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating the subject, but she will need advice and in-service training to help her to carry out the task, although she is aware of what needs to be done. Staff have received some recent training on the National Numeracy Strategy and the co-ordinator analyses national test results. From this they identify topics to focus on and set pupil targets. This good practice needs to be extended across the school. Although teachers generally use the National Numeracy Strategy framework to plan units of work for their classes, all the planning is undertaken by teachers working individually.

SCIENCE

The school undertakes the national tests for pupils aged 11. These are externally marked. The results for 2001 show that levels of attainment are considerably below the national averaged, with 68 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 or above compared with a national average of 87 per cent. Girls out-perform boys: 56 per cent of girls and 42 per cent of boys achieve Level 4 and above. Caution is required when evaluating these results because of the small number of pupils (16) taking the test. All pupils achieved Level 3 and above. Some of the pupils' low scores may have been due to misunderstanding of test questions. Feedback to the school from the external

marker points to pupils' apparent misunderstanding of some test questions, especially relevant for pupils with English as an additional language, and their lack of familiarity with the strict requirements of the test.

The evidence from lessons observed is that standard of pupils' knowledge and their ability to use it to debate issues is good. Work presented in books however, is limited and does not reflect pupils' oral contributions in class.

No teaching of science was seen in Year 3. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge of materials and their properties, environmental issues, physical processes, life processes, and living things. They carry out experiments well, working co-operatively in small groups. They relate their Islamic beliefs to the world around them. In a good Year 5 science lesson on drugs and drug misuse, pupils entered into a lively debate about the reasons why people smoke, drink alcohol, and take drugs. They discussed the effects for these and related their understanding of the issues to the teachings of Islam. In a good Year 6 lesson on the effect of the immersion into water on the weights of certain items, pupils used materials accurately, recorded their results and discussed these with each other. They could predict what might happen to certain items, and some pupils were beginning to detect patterns in their results.

The quality of teaching in science is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes good. Good features of the teaching include clear, direct exposition by the teacher, a very strong focus on practical and investigative science, and the use of project books for individual homework studies. Some very good examples of these were observed in Year 5. The teaching in science is lively and practical. The school makes use of the Science Museum, has joined the youth section for the British Association for Science, some have created butterfly gardens in their rooms to support their work in life processes and living things.

The school has recently appointed the Year 6 teacher as the subject co-ordinator. She is a science graduate and is well placed to lead the management of the subject. The staff plan units of work based on the QCA science schemes but this is done individually. At present, the school does not ensure continuity of provision for pupils or progression in their learning.