



Al-Sadiq And Al-Zahra School

CONTENTS

[Introduction and summary](#)

[Purpose and scope of the inspection](#)

[Information about the school](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[What the school does well](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations](#)

[What the school must do in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act \(DDA\) 2002:](#)

[Compliance with the regulations for registration](#)

[1. The quality of education provided by the school](#)

[The quality of the curriculum](#)

[The quality of the teaching and assessment](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act:](#)

[4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[6. The quality of information for parents and other partners](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[The school should also make it clear to parents and others that the following documents are available on request:](#)

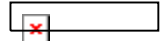
[7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints](#)

[Does the school meet the requirements for registration?](#)

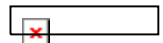
[What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?](#)

[School details](#)

Introduction and summary

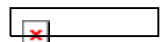


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

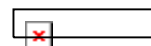
Information about the school



Al-Sadiq and Al-Zahra school was set up in 1991 by the Al-Khoei Foundation, an international Shia charitable organisation dedicated to educational and relief work. It is a well-established school that provides primary education in a mixed setting up to Year 2 and single sex education from Year 3 to Year 11 under the same roof. It is situated in the urban district of Brondesbury in the London borough of Brent. It currently provides full-time education for 175 boys and 206 girls. The school

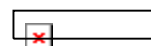
aims to provide Muslim pupils with 'an education based upon academic excellence coupled with principles of morality, tolerance and spiritual understanding' to prepare them to live 'in a fast changing secular environment which often manifests itself in a declining trend in moral and social behaviour'. It is also committed to providing "a caring, supportive and well-ordered environment in which children from a variety of cultural and social backgrounds can feel secure and equally valued."

Summary of main findings



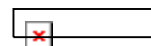
Al-Sadiq and Al-Zahra is a good school. It provides a secure, orderly Islamic environment in which all pupils can learn and make good progress. It is a culturally and religiously diverse community where the principal promotes a harmonious environment and pupils feel comfortable with each other. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with a large minority of good and very good teaching. Pupils are generally well-behaved, respectful and courteous and value the close working relationships they have with the staff. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is one of the strengths of the school and a clear reflection of its ethos.

What the school does well



- it provides a broad curriculum which meets the educational needs of the pupils;
- pupils make good progress and achieve well at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in a number of subjects;
- teaching is satisfactory overall, with a large minority of good and very good teaching and teachers are enthusiastic and eager to develop professionally;
- working relationships between pupils and teachers are good and pupils are well-behaved;
- pupils are well cared for, happy in the school, self-confident and proud of their Islamic identity; and
- parents are very supportive of the school.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



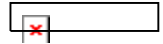
- provide a systematic programme of careers education for all secondary school pupils as indicated in section 1 of this report;
- attend to matters concerning the welfare, health and safety of the pupils identified in section 3;
- ensure that parents and other partners receive or are aware of the information listed in section 6; and
- devise a written complaints procedure and ensure that it meets each of the requirements set out in section 7.

What the school must do in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002:

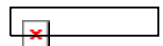
In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- draw up a three-year plan to show how it will make the school premises and the curriculum accessible to disabled pupils.

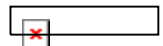
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



Al-Sadiq and Al-Zahra provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a good range of options contributing to high achievement. Both the primary and secondary parts of the school follow the National Curriculum. In addition, pupils attend classes of Islamic studies, Qur'an and Arabic, which take up 10 per cent of their timetable. The Child Care Inspector who carried out an inspection in the reception class during the inspection week, evaluated the provision as good in some aspects and very good in others. All pupils study history and geography up to Year 9 after which they choose one as an option. They also study information and communication technology (ICT) up to GCSE level.

Pupils take the national tests at the end of Year 2, Year 6 and Year 9. Their results in Year 2 and Year 6 are above the national average and are better in English than in mathematics and science. By the end of Year 9, test results in English show a weakness in writing. 2003 GCSE results were well above the national average in science and in mathematics and just below the national average in English for five or more A*-C grades. Achievement in science and in mathematics is consistently very high over the years. 2004 GCSE English results were higher and were broadly in line with the national average. The vast majority of pupils take their GCSE examinations in Arabic in Year 8 or Year 9. GCSE results in Arabic and Islamic studies are very high, with 100% at A*-C. All pupils study French from Year 7 to Year 11 and they achieve well in their GCSE examinations. Pupils are also encouraged to take a GCSE examination in other home languages such as Farsi, Urdu and Gujarati. High achievers are offered the possibility of taking Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced level (A2) courses in Year 10 and Year 11. To date pupils have been examined in Arabic, Farsi and mathematics and they have achieved very well.

Pupils value the opportunity to take science as a single, double or triple award which gives them access to a broad range of careers. Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils gain an experience of aesthetic and creative learning through the study of other subjects, in particular English literature, Islamic studies and ICT. The provision of art lessons, such as Arabic calligraphy, would enhance their creative learning. Pupils would enrich their experience and develop their life skills through the study of non-examined subjects such as food technology and drama. In the primary school, pupils only have one lesson of physical education per week, which is insufficient.

Overall, the curriculum is well supported by appropriate plans, schemes of work and opportunities for assessment. However, there are inconsistencies between subjects explained partly by high staff

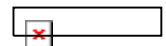
turnover and insufficient planning guidance given to new staff.

The school is successful in teaching personal, social and health education through various subjects, such as Islamic studies, science and English, and a range of activities such as assemblies, prayers and lectures. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, for their moral choices, for the welfare of others and for the organisation of lessons and activities through the reward system as well as the monitors and prefects roles.

Careers guidance across the school is as yet under-developed and work experience is arranged by families not school staff, with the result that some pupils miss the opportunity.

Pupils' learning is extended effectively by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as field trips to Epping Forest in biology, trips to France, inter-school sports competitions and camping events. However, in discussion pupils expressed their wish for regular clubs.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and there is a large minority of good and very good teaching. In a few lessons, teaching has too many weaknesses.

The main strengths of good or very good teaching are good subject knowledge, positive working relationships and the effective use of resources. Appropriate and diverse methods also allow for a good amount of interaction and enable pupils to improve their speaking and thinking skills while effective questioning draws out pupils' understanding. Differentiated planning, cross-curricular links, rigorous on-going assessment and involvement of pupils in self-assessment, and diagnostic marking also enhance pupils' learning effectively.

For example, in an excellent Arabic lesson that was very well planned and covered the four language skills, Year 6 pupils were not afraid to use new material because their teacher supported them sensitively. The teacher made excellent use of phonics and analogy to reinforce pronunciation and memorisation of grammar. Individual pupils were invited to assume the teacher's role at the end of the lesson to question their peers and assess how much they had learnt. The teacher's very good class management ensured that pupils retained their enthusiasm in an orderly environment.

Satisfactory lessons have some or many of these features. They do not include planned activities to match individual learning needs; they use a limited range of teaching methods and do not build the development of specific skills into their planning.

In one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils had not achieved as much as they could have because the teacher had not built on their prior knowledge to extend their learning. In the other unsatisfactory lessons, insufficient learning took place because under-developed class management skills resulted in lost control of the flow of the lesson, or even in a few cases control of the class because of inadequate management of planned activities.

In most lessons, working relationships are good and pupils value the quality of these relationships. Behaviour is good overall.

Classroom resources are adequate and well used by teachers. However, the ICT suite is currently under-used and ICT is not sufficiently developed as a learning tool in other subjects. Some pupils feel that they have insufficient books and other resources, including computers, to do their work during and outside school hours.

There are suitable assessment procedures and assessment is frequent and regular. Teachers use

the end of lessons well to reinforce the learning. Homework is frequent and extends pupils' learning. Assessment does not yet inform planning closely and is not used to improve teaching and learning sufficiently rigorously. This is because the school has not appointed curriculum leaders and has not drawn a development plan. Data needs to be used systematically to track the progress of pupils in each area of the subject and to plan suitable activities to match individual pupils' needs. Staff require further guidance to improve their teaching skills and benefit from a continuing professional development programme. The quality of teaching and learning needs to be monitored rigorously; the school needs to ensure that all plans incorporate skills as well as knowledge and are consistent with schemes of work.

Although the school makes adequate provision for the large number of pupils learning English as an additional language, their needs should be assessed more rigorously and their learning should be better supported to raise standards in English. It would be most beneficial to train staff for this purpose. Not all teachers use opportunities to develop literacy through their subject consistently. However, in a successful Year 11 history lesson the teacher led her pupils in a discussion of the reasons for the Wall Street Crash. She used a range of strategies to raise their standard of oral English, including presentation of key words and good questioning to elicit understanding of high level vocabulary. She modelled precise, good quality language throughout the lesson which the pupils could emulate. As a result, pupils expressed themselves confidently, competently and maturely.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

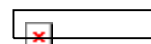
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- provide a systematic programme of careers education for all secondary school pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g)).

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The school has a strong Islamic ethos which is reflected in the behaviour and attitudes of both pupils and staff in assemblies, lessons, congregational prayers and at other times. In many lessons and curriculum areas, especially in Islamic studies, opportunities are taken to encourage pupils to develop socially, morally and spiritually. Wall posters and displays convey the Islamic ethos and the school discipline policy establishes high standards which are borne out in the behaviour of the great majority of pupils. Pupils also have opportunities for cultural and spiritual development through Ramadan youth activities and Qur'an and nashid competitions.

The evident emphasis on moral education enables pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the law. In the majority of lessons observed where pupils adhered to class rules and showed respect to their teachers and peers. In the questionnaires pupils returned, they said that they felt safe in the school and the vast majority felt that their property was safe.

Pupils are enabled to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through the teaching of Islamic studies. For example, a great deal of attention is paid to the theme of Islamic akhlaq (good character); all classrooms keep akhlaq charts as part of the reward system. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and evaluate moral and spiritual issues and apply this to their personal lives. Pupils made presentations to the class, or to the whole school in assembly, which develops their self-confidence and their speaking and organisational skills. In a Year 10 English lesson, pupils

practised their oral presentations for the GCSE course. Topics chosen were imaginative and well researched. The teacher asked individual pupils to give their presentation to the class and the others made notes and offered constructive criticism. The pupils showed a clear awareness of the criteria for good public speaking and those who were more nervous were sensitively supported in overcoming their reluctance to speak in front of the rest of the class.

During congregational prayers, pupil monitors and prefects are responsible for discipline and prefects also assume responsibility for organising the prayers. The older pupils frequently give a short talk at the end of the congregational prayer. This contributes to a clear sense of collective responsibility and moral and religious purpose within the school. Pupils are also aware of issues within the community and beyond, as was evident in discussion with them, and recently they have taken the initiative to raise funds for several international charities.

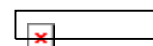
Pupils have the opportunity to learn about the public institutions and services in England through lessons in Islamic studies, careers, history and visits to such institutions as Parliament. However, the school's contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship currently lacks a sharp focus. Some pupils feel that the school does not listen sufficiently to their views. There is no school council to improve communication between the school and its pupils or to develop the organisational and thinking skills of all year groups through experiencing the democratic process.

The school's pupils and staff from a diverse range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and one of its strengths is the harmonious `family' atmosphere referred to by both pupils and staff during interviews with the inspection team. Even greater appreciation of and a respect for their own and other cultures, as well as promotion of tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions, result when appropriate opportunities are provided. Such understanding was observed in an Islamic studies lesson where Year 10 pupils had to make the intellectual effort to appreciate the Islamic and the atheist points of view on evil and suffering. The group was divided into a Muslim camp and an atheist camp to debate the question and within each camp pupils challenged each other to refine their thoughts and arguments.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school promotes pupils' welfare, health and safety effectively and, consequently, pupils feel safe in the school. There is adequate supervision of pupils throughout the day. However, in three lessons observed during the inspection, sharp-nosed scissors were used by primary and secondary pupils and had to be removed. Policies are shared with the staff and some are in process of being updated, such as the policy on the health and safety of pupils on educational visits.

There is a detailed policy for child protection and the child protection officer keeps up-to-date with current practice and delivers regular training to staff. The anti-bullying policy is known to pupils and they are familiar with the procedure to follow to report bullying because the school raises their awareness regularly through assemblies and tutorials. The school has a clear good behaviour policy and keeps written records of sanctions imposed on pupils for serious disciplinary offences.

All pupils know where to find at least one First Aid kit and know who the First-Aiders are. The school benefits from the expertise of an overseas-trained paediatrician who is employed as a registrar and has some responsibilities for health and safety matters. For example, he makes himself fully available at lunch time and break times to deal with accidents and emergencies. He liaises with parents and outside agencies as appropriate. He keeps records of pupils who have a medical

condition, informs the relevant staff and oversees the taking of prescribed medication. First Aid training is part of the induction programme for new staff and all pupils and teachers receive training from St John's Ambulance every year.

There is an efficient procedure to deal with repairs. The school has a satisfactory level of fire safety identified by a recent risk assessment.

The maintenance of attendance and admission registers does not fully meet the requirements of the regulations. The admissions register needs to include all the required details, including the names and addresses of parents. The school should ensure that corrections in the attendance registers are made in such a way that original entries are clearly distinguishable. The school needs to take steps towards fulfilling its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets most but not all of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

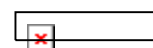
In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- maintain an admissions register and an attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) regulations 1995 (paragraph 3(9)); and
- prepare and implement a full written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DfES guidance (reference HSPV2): Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits". (paragraph 3(9)).

What does the school need to do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act:

- draw up a three-year plan to show how it will make the school premises and the curriculum accessible to disabled pupils.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The principal has overall management responsibility for the school. There are 32 teachers and 8 administration and support staff. Staffing is at an appropriate level for the size of the school. All secondary teachers and the vast majority of primary teachers have suitable subject qualifications. There is a good level of expertise in the school to support the induction and development of teachers who are new to the profession. However, the school needs to have a more rigorous approach to training to ensure teachers' continuing professional development.

The school is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for the purpose of undertaking the requisite checks. Checks are appropriately carried out for members of staff employed in a teaching or supervisory capacity, Medical fitness is checked through a self-declaration form which the staff complete, sign and submit to the principal. The checking procedure is inadequate as only oral references are sought whereas written references should be obtained.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

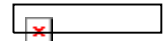
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003 the school should provide for parents of pupils and prospective pupils the school should:

- prior to the confirmation of their appointment the school should ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out in writing to confirm the identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references of members of staff (paragraph 4(c)).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is housed in a two-storied purpose-built Victorian building, formerly the Brondesbury and Kilburn High School, which offers compact accommodation for the present primary and secondary schools and does not allow for expansion.

The school provides adequate accommodation and resources. Each year group has its own classroom in which most teaching takes place. Science practical work takes place in the two dedicated laboratories. There is also an ICT suite with 25 high-specification personal computers that are internet-linked, a high speed laser printer and a digital projector. Teaching rooms are appropriate in size for the present number of pupils on roll. However, the boys' laboratory is barely adequate in size for the current number of pupils in Year 11 and the school needs to review its strategy for teaching practical work in order to avoid congestion. Pupils make good use of the school library which is large enough to accommodate a whole class at a time. Its collection of books, educational videos, audiotapes and compact discs supports the curriculum adequately. The library also has four Pentium 3 computers which are used by pupils.

The building is maintained in an adequate condition and is in a reasonable state of decoration. The teaching rooms are well-lit and have good ventilation. Many corridors and some classrooms have displays of pupils' work and attractively presented quotations of significance to Muslims. There is appropriate flooring and it is in a satisfactory condition. The sound insulation and acoustics allow satisfactory teaching and communication.

The school makes good use of its larger rooms. There is a spacious school hall used for girls' assemblies and girls' prayers. There is also a dedicated prayer (salat/namaz) room with suitable prayer mats used for boys' prayers and assemblies. Pupils who are ill or unwell have the use of a large medical room. It has a couch and easy chairs and is conveniently close to the toilets. The medical room is supervised by a qualified paediatrician.

The school canteen provides fresh halal food, prepared on-site. There is a large kitchen, as well as two dining areas that provide suitably furnished separate accommodation for boys and girls to sit down and have their lunch. One of the dining rooms is also used for primary assemblies.

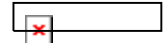
The school gymnasium provides spacious accommodation for physical education. The trustees plan to refurbish the gymnasium and update the equipment. Pupils make good use of the three outdoor paved play areas. However, there is only limited playground equipment for pupils, boys in particular, in order for them to play a range of safe ball games at break times.

There are adequate toilet facilities for boys, girls and staff. There are good tahara (sanitary washing) facilities and satisfactory wudu (ablution) facilities. Pupils' toilets are equipped with electric hand driers.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school provides an appropriate range of information to parents and staff. A prospectus provides most of information required about the school's ethos and curriculum, pupils' examination results, school facilities, policies and procedures. However, the prospectus does not include the particulars of the school's policies on discipline and exclusions, on special educational needs and English as an additional language (EAL). Furthermore, some of the information presented no longer reflects current curriculum provision or procedures. Each child is given a homework diary which parents are required to monitor daily and sign weekly. The school also provides a handbook that outlines the school routine, the roles and responsibilities of teachers and includes the school's policies. However it is also in need of updating.

Although the school has data on examination results and staffing, as well as a range of policies, parents are not made aware that such information is available on request. The policy on EAL required by the regulations has yet to be devised by the school.

The system of the annual reporting of pupils' achievement gives parents a comprehensive summary of their child's progress. The meetings organised between parents and teachers give them the opportunity to discuss further how their child can improve. However, not all parents feel well informed about their child's progress.

The school liaises effectively with outside agencies such as the LEA of Brent with which it works in partnership for financial and educational purposes.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should provide for parents of pupils and prospective pupils:

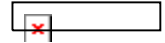
- the full name, usual residential address and the telephone number of the school proprietor, or, where the proprietor is a corporation, a Scottish firm or body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal officer (paragraph 6(2)(b));
- particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)); and
- particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f)).

The school should also make it clear to parents and others that the following documents are available on request:

- particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h));
- particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including

- the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i));
- details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)); and
- the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



The school does not have a written complaints procedure. Parents are able to discuss issues and concerns they may have with the principal, either by telephone and/or in person. However, the present arrangements are inadequate because they do not enable the school to deal with complaints appropriately and, consequently, they need urgent review.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

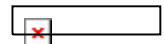
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- devise a written complaints procedure and ensure that it meets each of the requirements in full paragraph 7(a) to paragraph 7(k) in the regulations.

School details



Name of school:	Al-Sadiq And Al-Zahra School
DfES ref number:	304/6072
Type of school:	Muslim
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3-16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 175, Girls 206, Total 381
Annual fees (day pupils):	Reception: £1,800, Primary: £2,400, Secondary: £3,450
Address of school:	134 Salusbury Road London NW6 6PF
E-mail address:	alsadiq@btconnect.com
Telephone number:	020 7372 7706
Fax number:	020 7372 2752
Headteacher:	Dr M Movahedi
Proprietor:	Al-Khoei Foundation
Lead Inspector:	Mrs M Messaoudi
Dates of inspection:	4 - 7 October 2004

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