

Inspection report
Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation
School

Independent school

DfES ref no: 871/6003

Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Dates of inspection: 28 November - 2 December 2005

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A 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

Islamic Shakhsyah Foundation School is an independent Muslim day school for pupils aged 3 - 11 years in the Slough area of Berkshire. The school was established by a group of mothers from a home-education background in 2002. They intended to educate their children according to an Islamic ethos. They aimed to develop an Islamic personality in children through a programme of learning. This programme is supported by the principle of maintaining small class sizes. The school is part of an educational trust that also runs another school in the Walthamstow area of London. The school aims to offer children a good quality education which reflects Islamic teachings and enables them to develop a personality '*shakhsyah*' with strong affiliation and love for their faith. The school fosters a desire for lifelong achievement. It offers an integrated curriculum that provides subjects from the National Curriculum in which Islamic values are reflected, as well as Islamic education. At the time of inspection there were 59 pupils (35 boys and 24 girls) on roll, of whom 10 were part-time. None of the children have statements of special educational needs.

Summary of main findings

Islamic Shakhsyah is a good and a growing school. Teaching and learning are mostly good and always at least satisfactory. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well-planned in accordance with the school's ethos. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Behaviour around the school and in the playground is very good. The school enjoys excellent support from parents. It meets all the requirements for registration.

What the school does well:

- the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and it has also developed a programme '*halaqah*' (The Circle) to develop pupils' personalities;
- the school offers a particularly individualised and caring environment for pupils by keeping class sizes small;
- teaching and learning are effective and pupils are making good progress;
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good; and
- the school's provision of information and its reporting to parents are effective.

Next Steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- produce an annual overall detailed scheme of work;
- continue to work on the school development plan;
- implement the plan for the school library and 'masjid'; and
- for progression, identify good local secondary schools.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced and of a good quality. The school has adopted the schemes of work for most subjects from the National Curriculum, including mathematics, English, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and geography. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, religious education (RE) and history are modified to reflect Islamic values according to the principle of '*halaqah*' (The Circle). Art and design, Arabic and physical education (PE) are also offered. Islamic studies are included in the '*halaqah*' part of the curriculum. The school does not offer music; instead it offers '*tajweed*' (the recitation of the holy Qur'an) and '*nasheeds*' (Islamic songs). At Key Stage 2 pupils learn the martial art of '*Wing Chung*' in addition to PE.

The school recognises and implements the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. It has adopted schemes of work devised by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA). A well-planned reading programme is also in place.

The subjects taught are well linked. For example, in a history lesson, Chinese culture, diet and other related topics were discussed and it was evident that the teacher was linking the history topic effectively with other subjects.

PSHE takes account of the '*halaqah*' curriculum. It is taught to all classes. It is well planned in the light of Islamic teachings. This programme contributes to pupils' good behaviour. During lessons and in the playground, pupils greet each other and they listen to teachers. They show great respect to teachers and other pupils and care for each other. Citizenship is also covered in the '*halaqah*' programme. This is supported by external visits and relevant events been organised in the school.

In the reception class, pupils enjoy a well planned curriculum. The planning takes account of the 'Early Years' guidance published by the QCA.

The curriculum is well managed. Variations in pupils' abilities are identified and considered in the planning process. Teachers co-operate in their planning to ensure that pupils make consistent progress across the year groups. Pupils who have English as an additional language are provided with extra help in class.

There is an effective curriculum planning policy for the long-, medium- and short-term. Teachers are expected to produce daily lesson plans for every subject. Parents are informed at the beginning of each term about the whole term's activities including any trips or educational visits.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of the majority of teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. All teaching is well planned and is linked to the relevant schemes of work. Pupils are given good opportunities to think for themselves and to question. Pupils also take active part in discussions and show interest in their lessons. As a result, they effectively acquire new knowledge and skills. Subject matter is well matched with the ages and abilities of pupils. The teachers identify pupils with difficulties and provide extra support and help. Pupils make good progress, so that, for example, in a Year 3 English lesson they were able to put simple sentences in order and observe the punctuation rules. Pupils successfully achieve the learning objectives set for lessons. In some lessons, children are invited to demonstrate their learning to others. In a history lesson in the reception class the teacher used pictures to narrate a story of the prophet's journey to Syria on a camel. All the pupils listened to the story with great interest. The teacher linked the lesson with other subjects of the curriculum.

The school has devised an assessment policy which ensures that the assessment of pupils' progress informs curriculum planning. End-of-term assessment results are reported to parents and discussed in the termly parents' open day. Pupils' achievements are measured by the school using the National Curriculum attainment targets in mathematics, English, science, ICT, geography and PE. The school is preparing to participate in National Curriculum tests from next year.

The majority of the parents agree that their children are making good progress. They agree that the teaching is good and that the staff expect their children to work hard and do their best.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. This is a small school in which pupils are known and cared for as individuals. There is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and pupils are courteous and helpful towards each other. The staff are warm towards the pupils and at the same time they encourage them to behave well and try hard.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is fostered through the '*halaqah*' curriculum comprising '*aqliyyah*' (logic) '*nafsiyah*' (natural disposition) '*hifz*' (memorisation of Qur'an), citizenship and history. The '*halaqah*' curriculum takes a broad-ranging approach to developing pupils' personalities '*shakhsiyah*' in light of Islamic teachings. There is also an emphasis on helping pupils develop as British Muslim citizens. For example, in one whole-school assembly entitled 'Serving the Community', pupils were asked to consider how they would help the wider community. Pupils responded with suggestions of studying hard, keeping the environment clean and tidy and helping the poor and needy.

The school rules provide a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour. Pupils consistently follow these rules and show consideration towards each other. Pupils have been assigned responsibilities including the distribution and collection of textbooks, stationery and homework at the start and end of each lesson. Boys and girls co-operate well and are keen to work and play together in the classroom and the playground. In a science lesson, pupils worked in pairs to investigate the properties of matter and developed their observations through discussion with each other.

There is a rich provision for pupils' social and cultural development. The school recognises the importance of first-hand experiences and of learning from educational visits.

Pupils have formed a school council. Its discussions centre around the needs of pupils and the identification of possible activities. The suggestions are conveyed to the headteacher by a delegation of three pupils.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school has all the required policies to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. All members of staff are given training in child protection. There is a named child protection officer whose role is known to all staff. The school has its own Islamic guidelines on good behaviour which reflect the school's distinctive ethos. It also has a written policy to promote good behaviour which includes a clearly expressed set of sanctions to be applied in the event of any pupil misbehaving.

Pupils are well supervised in the play ground and teachers closely observe and support pupils during their lunch and prayer-time. At the start of school day, four members of staff receive pupils in the playground to ensure their safety.

The school maintains attendance and admission registers as required. There is a satisfactory level of fire safety, confirmed by the school's risk assessment and by a report from the fire authority. Staff are given training and 'in case of fire' instructions are displayed. Fire drills are regularly conducted and evacuation times are recorded.

The school has a satisfactory First Aid policy and there are sufficient trained First Aiders.. All members of staff are aware of the First Aid procedures. Pupils with long-term medical conditions are identified and staff members are made aware of these. There is a medical room with washbasin, a bed and a First Aid box.

The relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils feel free to assert their views. Courtesy, care and respect are shown by all. Pupils feel safe, relaxed and happy. All parents agree that their children like the school. The school complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

Islamic Shakhsyah Foundation Trust is the proprietor of the school, and the organisation is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). All staff have been subjected to satisfactory enhanced checks with the CRB. The school operates an appropriate recruitment policy, with checks carried out to confirm the applicant's identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school's accommodation is adequate and appropriate for its purpose. It is located in a three-storey former office block. The building is well-maintained and kept tidy and clean. There is a nearby parking facility for staff and visitors. The well-surfaced playground is surrounded by a high wooden fence. There are six class-rooms and an ICT room. The class-rooms and corridors are appropriately decorated with displays of learning materials and a good range of pupils' work. The rooms are sufficient in size, well lit and adequately heated. The school has a plan for a library and a prayer room '*masjid*' in the near future. The school has sufficient unused area for these projects.

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 other partners. The welcoming family atmosphere encourages parents to have an on-going dialogue with the school.

There is a system of regular reporting to parents on the progress being made by their children. This includes termly written reports which are full and informative. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's reported progress with the teachers at the termly open days. There are regular newsletters which keep parents informed about the events and activities at the school.

Copies of the school prospectus and the '*halaqah*' curriculum are available for parents in the entrance to the school. The prospectus and the curriculum booklet are both informative and attractive. The majority of parents who responded to the

pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a high level of satisfaction with the information they receive from the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

This school's complaints procedure is clearly written and readily available to parents. The policy allows for a complaint to be dealt with informally but includes further formal procedures so that, if required, complaints can be treated in a fair and objective manner. The timescales are clearly set out. The majority of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with issues and concerns.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation
DfES Number:	871/6003
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 29 Girls: 20 Total: 49
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys: 6 Girls: 4 Total: 10
Annual fees (day pupils):	Single child: £2,400. Two children or more: £2,040 per child
Address of school:	Lion House Petersfield Avenue Slough Berkshire SL2 5DN
Telephone number:	01753 518000
Email address:	mail-slough@isfnet.org.uk
Headteacher:	Mrs Farah Ahmed
Proprietor:	Mrs Yusra Hamilton
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Mohammad Ismail
Date of inspection:	28 November 2005

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