

**Inspection report**  
**Jamia Islamia Birmingham**  
**Islamic College**  
**Independent school**  
**DfES ref no: 330/6106**

**Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002**

**Dates of inspection: 27 February - 2 March 2006**

## **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 college's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

### **Information about the college**

Jamia Islamia College is an independent secondary day school in Birmingham. It is freestanding and is not connected to any local mosque. It admits boys aged from 11 to 22 years and there are 115 pupils on roll. All are of Asian heritage, mainly of Bangladeshi origin. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and none are at the early stages of acquiring English. All attended local primary schools in the city and enter with broadly average attainment.

The college offers an Islamic curriculum in the morning and a secular, national curriculum in the afternoon. Pupils who stay on beyond the age of 16 follow an advanced Islamic education leading to an Islamic theology degree. This qualification will enable them to become imams.

The college opened in February 2000 and was then known as Jamia Qurania. It moved to its present location in May 2005 and changed name to its current one. The proprietor is the principal of the college, which belongs to Al-falah Trust, a limited company. A board of trustees oversees its work. The college has applied for charitable trust status but this has not yet been granted. The accommodation is currently being extended and modernised.

The college mission is to *'provide a high quality centre for learning, where pupils receive a good quality and balanced education within an Islamic environment'*.

### **Summary of main findings**

Jamia Islamia College provides a satisfactory quality of education overall. However, the quality of teaching and the curriculum in history and geography (humanities) is not effective. There are several weaknesses in health and safety provision and the checks carried out on staff before their appointment are not robust enough. The leadership has a more generous view of the quality of college provision than inspection justified. This is because its self-review systems are not sufficiently analytical or evaluative.

The college has experienced turbulence in staffing since it opened. Consequently, pupils' learning in National Curriculum subjects has lacked continuity and progression, which has considerably slowed their progress. Within the last six months teaching has improved and is now satisfactory overall. However, there is too much variation and not enough good teaching. The rate of pupils' progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science has increased and is now satisfactory, although progress over time is poor. By the end of Year 11 the majority

of pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable, reflecting the past instability in the school. Pupils' progress in Islamic studies is good because of the effective provision made in all areas of learning. Lesson planning in general does not ensure that all pupils are suitably stretched. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. Relationships are good at all levels and the college has the confidence of parents.

#### **What the college does well:**

- its Islamic ethos and values encourage boys to deepen their faith and become responsible young British Muslims;
- it provides good teaching and learning in Islamic studies and has clear strengths in the teaching of mathematics and science;
- its provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good; and
- it fosters good working relationships, encourages positive attitudes to learning and promotes good behaviour by pupils.

#### **What the college must do in order to comply with the regulations**

- improve the quality of the curriculum, teaching and resources as indicated in section 1 of this report;
- rectify all outstanding health and safety issues as identified in section 3;
- ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all staff before their appointment as noted in section 4; and
- ensure that the outside of the school is kept in a clean, tidy and hygienic state and adequate outside space is provided for recreation as noted in section 5;

#### **What the college must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002:**

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

# COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

## 1. The quality of education provided by the college

### The quality of the curriculum

Jamia Islamia College provides pupils with an education that integrates Islamic education and subjects from the National Curriculum. The Islamic curriculum is taught in the morning and the National Curriculum in the afternoon.

The Islamic curriculum is broad, balanced and of good quality. It enables pupils to make good progress in all areas of learning. The aim is to provide a six-year programme of Islamic studies to enable pupils to become an *alim* (scholar). The programme is offered in mixed-age classes according to pupils' abilities and needs. Currently the school provides the first five years of the full programme. From September 2007 pupils will follow the six-year course.

The curriculum consists of *tfseer*, including related topics such as *usool al tafseer* (Qur'anic translation and interpretation), and *hadith* (accounts of what the Prophet did, said or approved), in addition to related topics such as *Usool al hadith* (the principals of hadith), and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence developed by one of the four main schools of jurisprudence). The course also includes *aqeeda* (beliefs), *tajweed* (Qur'anic recitation), *tahfeez* (memorisation), Islamic history, *usool-al-fiqh* (sources of jurisprudence), Islamic manners, *seera* (life of the Prophet Muhammad), *nahwa* (syntax) and *saraf* (*morphology*). Arabic language, Arabic literature, Bengali and Urdu are also taught. Examination results are good and in *tahfeez* they are very good.

The National Curriculum is satisfactory in all subjects apart from humanities, where it is inadequate. Pupils make sound progress in most lessons. However, in humanities pupils are underachieving.

In Year 11 the college offers General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and Bengali alongside science, geography, physical education (PE), personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship programmes. In June 2007, Year 10 pupils are planning to take GCSE examinations in all these subjects plus science and geography. They will not take an examination in PE. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a broad and balanced curriculum based on the national programmes of study, including design, technology and art (DTA). The college concentrates on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills as these are considered essential for their future economic well-being.

The college has written policies for all subjects which inform and support their teaching. Schemes of work exist for all subjects, but they lack consistency. For example, the ICT scheme of work provides thorough and comprehensive guidance on what will be taught and how. In contrast, the humanities scheme of work is too general and is not followed properly. As a result, the subject matter taught to pupils is not suitable and does not enable them to make adequate progress. Planning documentation lacks detail about how pupils' differing needs and abilities will be met,

and not enough is said about the methods to be used. Insufficient attention is given in the curriculum to promoting pupils' independent, investigative and practical skills. The curriculum does not yet fully meet the needs of the more able.

Year 11 pupils have begun to have a suitable careers education to inform them about their career and further education options. There are plans to extend this provision to other year groups. Homework, extra-curricular Islamic studies, prayer time and, on occasion, speech and singing competitions (the *tarbiyah* programme) are making a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils say they would like a wider range of activities, particularly recreational and community events. They consider that the college could do more to raise funds for good causes. Inspectors agree with these views. Pupils do not currently go on visits so do not have opportunities to broaden their horizons or develop their interests further.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching and learning in Islamic studies is good. Teachers are well qualified and have very good subject knowledge. A mix of traditional and modern teaching methods is used and both are effective. Activities are challenging, worthwhile and lead to a high level of interest. Class time is managed wisely; however, lessons are shorter than normal and discussion is sometimes curtailed because pupils have to move on. Good relations are established with pupils and teachers expect them to work hard. Praise and encouragement are used well to develop pupils' confidence and consolidate their understanding. On-going assessment ensures that teachers are suitably informed about pupils' needs and their prior attainments. As a result, work is pitched at the right level and pupils succeed. Homework is set regularly to reinforce effectively what is learned in lessons. Pupils say that at times they receive too much.

Assessment is good. The final examinations are conducted by an external examination panel. Pupils who have memorised the Qur'an are awarded the *hafiz* certificate and those who have successfully completed the *alim* course are awarded the *alim* degree. Fifteen pupils have successfully completed their memorisation (*tahfeez*) and have served in the local mosques during the last Ramadan.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all National Curriculum subjects, apart from humanities where it is inadequate. Teaching has improved as a result of effective in-service training and better schemes of work and lesson planning. There is too much variation and inconsistency in teaching and not enough is good. Teachers do not always show a good understanding of pupils' specific needs or prior attainments when planning lessons. As a result, work is not always appropriately matched to pupils' differing needs, particularly those of the more able.

Teachers form good relations with pupils and the practice of regularly sharing lesson objectives at the start of sessions is helping pupils understand what is to be learned. In the most effective lessons, work is challenging, pitched at the right level and builds well on pupils' previous learning. Teachers engage the pupils' interest in the subject matter, harness their enthusiasm, enabling them to achieve as well as they can. In the less effective lessons, there are some common weaknesses. At times work is not demanding enough for particular groups or individuals. The teachers'

expectations are not always high enough, particularly in exacting the best from the more able. Work is over-directed by the teacher, with too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and work independently to find things out for themselves. In the very small number of lessons where teaching was inadequate, staff set their sights too low and activities lacked challenge. Ineffective teaching is dull; it fails to capture pupils' imagination, and therefore their behaviour and attitudes to learning deteriorate.

In general, there are too few opportunities for pupils to undertake practical and investigative work and show initiative in class. There are weaknesses in planning that result in work not always being suitably matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Teaching in humanities does not enable pupils to make progress according to their capabilities. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject matter are weak. Consequently, work is not properly planned and the methods used are ineffective.

Assessment systems are generally satisfactory but are inadequate in humanities. Pupils take GCSE examinations and national tests at the end of Years 9 and 11 that are externally marked. Suitable systems are in place to judge pupils' attainment and teachers know the likely grades individuals will achieve in the national tests. Attainment is much lower than normal because most pupils have had a disrupted education which has considerably slowed their progress. Results show that there is an improving trend in pupils' performance. Marking in mathematics and science is constructive and developmental and this helps pupils know how to improve, but this does not happen consistently across all subjects. When reviewing work, not enough attention is given to improving pupils' presentation, which is generally weak.

Overall, there are sufficient textbooks to meet course requirements. However, there are insufficient resources for practical and investigative work, particularly in science, mathematics and DTA. There are not enough computers and pupils have to share them, which is not satisfactory. The library has an adequate supply of Islamic reading material but there is a shortage of general fiction and non-fiction books to promote wider reading. There are plans to improve the level of resources and equipment when the new science and ICT accommodation is built.

***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

No.

***What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?***

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

- *draw up and implement comprehensive plans and schemes of work for all subjects (paragraph 1(2));*
- *ensure that subject matter in humanities is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of the pupils (paragraph 1(2)(b));*
- *improve the humanities curriculum so all pupils learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i));*

- *ensure that teaching, particularly in humanities, enables pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding and make progress according to their ability (paragraph 1(3)(a));*
- *ensure that teaching enables pupils to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 1(3)(b));*
- *ensure that lessons are well planned, effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used and class time is used wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c));*
- *ensure that all teachers take pupils' needs, aptitudes and prior attainment into account when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d));*
- *improve teachers' subject knowledge in humanities (paragraph 1(3)(e));*
- *improve the quality, quantity and range of classroom resources (paragraph 1(3)(f)); and*
- *implement a coherent framework to measure how well pupils achieve in each subject and ensure that the needs of different groups of pupils are reflected in the planning of teachers (paragraph 1(3)(g)).*

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils and parents say that the college could further enhance social and cultural development by providing more activities including trips, visits and recreational activities outside lessons. Inspectors agree with their views.

Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The strong Islamic ethos ensures that pupils successfully develop a set of values, principles and beliefs which inform their perspective on life and their behaviour. Assemblies on topics such as Lent, and teaching about Judaism in citizenship, helps pupils gain an understanding of others' beliefs and lifestyles.

Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils acquire the knowledge of right and wrong through their Qur'anic studies, *hadith* and *fiqh*. They have a very secure moral framework that influences and informs their moral behaviour. The teachers provide very good role models and helpfully develop pupils' understanding of the college's shared and agreed values. Pupils show great respect to their teachers and to each other. They relate well to a range of social contexts and their behaviour is good. In Islamic theology lessons debates challenge, in appropriate ways, the views held in society. Such activity promotes pupils' self-knowledge and assertiveness. The pupil council is making a positive social contribution by improving welfare and care arrangements on site. A prefect system encourages the older pupils to take responsibility and care for others.

Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Islamic studies give pupils a very good understanding of their own culture and religion. The citizenship programme

promotes effectively the importance of tolerance and harmony between different cultural and religious traditions. Pupils are suitably taught about public institutions and services in England. For example, in one lesson seen, pupils drew parallels between some of the regulations in Islamic theology and those used in the British legal system.

***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

### **3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

There is a written health and safety policy including guidance on the supervision of activities outside college. However, the policy is not implemented effectively. Risk assessments are not robust or systematic enough to identify potential sources of danger on the college site. Risk assessments are not carried out for educational visits. Pupils say that the arrangements for keeping their property safe, and packed lunches hygienic, are not good enough. Inspectors agree.

The college has an appropriate child protection policy and a designated senior member of staff is responsible for co-ordinating action and liaising with agencies. It does not keep an up-to-date electrical equipment register and not all electrical equipment has been passed safe to use.

There is no fire officer report and no adequate fire risk assessment has been undertaken. Fire drills are not conducted often enough. Fire fighting appliances are not serviced regularly and extinguishers are not always signed appropriately. The fire alarm was not working at the start of the inspection and it has not been subject to regular testing.

There is a written First Aid policy but it is not comprehensive enough. For example, there is no guidance on hygiene procedures, how to deal with blood spillages or body fluid or how medicines will be stored and administered. There is a suitably trained First Aider on site at all times and accidents are recorded appropriately. The college has a suitable written behaviour policy that clearly states the sanctions to be adopted if pupils misbehave. A written record is kept on the rare occasions there are serious disciplinary offences.

The college maintains an admission register but it does not contain the emergency telephone numbers for all pupils. Attendance registers are taken at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions but they are not properly completed. The daily cumulative attendance and authorised and unauthorised totals are not recorded.

The college has a policy in relation to the DDA but has not yet drawn up a three-year plan of action to meet DDA requirements. The policy does not specify how, over time, the college will increase the accessibility of the premises and the curriculum within the resources that it can afford.

***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

No.



**What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?**

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

- *ensure that thorough risk assessments are undertaken for educational visits, and that action is taken and outcomes are formally recorded (paragraphs 3(2)(c));*
- *have regard to the Department for Education and Skills guidance: 'Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers, and in particular conduct risk assessments for the college premises and ensure that an up-to-date electrical register is kept and all items on the inventory are subject to an annual electrical check by a qualified person (paragraph 3(4));*
- *arrange for a fire officer to urgently inspect the premises, and ensure that fire risk assessments and fire alarm tests are undertaken and outcomes are formally recorded (paragraph 3(5));*
- *ensure that a comprehensive First Aid policy is produced and it is effectively implemented (paragraph 3(6)); and*
- *ensure that attendance and admission registers are completed correctly (paragraph 3(9)).*

**What does the college need to do to comply with the DDA?**

*In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the college should:*

- *devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.*

#### **4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The principal is the proprietor of the college. He has been subject to a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check at an enhanced level because he regularly teaches and supervises pupils. Most staff have been checked with the CRB for their suitability to work with children. The leadership failed to apply checks on two teachers prior to starting permanent employment. Applications have been made to the CRB for both staff but the outcomes have not yet been obtained.

The college has a suitable recruitment policy but it is not implemented effectively. Before confirming appointment, checks are made to confirm the medical fitness of staff. However, checks are not carried out to confirm their identity or previous employment history. References are not sought and no check is made to confirm staff qualifications.

**Does the college meet the requirements for registration?**

*No.*

***What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?***

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

- *ensure that, prior to their appointment, all staff have been subject to a check with the CRB to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b)); and*
- *ensure that, prior to confirmation of their appointment, appropriate checks are carried out on applicants for posts regarding their identity, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references (paragraph 4(c)).*

**5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The college is on one site. It is housed in a converted two-storey factory that has been refurbished and extended for educational use. There are eight classrooms that are appropriate in size for the number of pupils using them. There is an office including a staff recreational area, college hall, computer and medical rooms and a small library area. New accommodation under construction will provide a science laboratory, ICT suite, kitchen and dining area, and three classrooms.

There are sufficient washroom facilities for staff and pupils. As there is no kitchen or facilities for the preparation and serving of food, pupils bring a packed lunch. Inside, the college is clean, tidy and in satisfactory decorative order. Suitable provision is made for pupils who are taken ill. Outside, some areas are not kept in a clean, tidy or hygienic condition. Building materials are not stored in a safe manner; pathways and the car park are uneven and unsafe. There are inadequate outdoor facilities for recreation.

There are a number of health and safety issues related to the premises, which inspectors drew to the principal's attention.

***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

*No.*

***What does the college need to do to comply with the regulations?***

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

- *ensure that external areas are maintained in a clean, tidy and hygienic state (paragraph 5(n)); and*
- *ensure that sufficient outside space is provided for recreational purposes (paragraph 5(t)).*

## **6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**

The prospectus provides appropriate and useful information about the college staffing, curriculum and ethos. Satisfactory written reports are sent to parents twice a year, and they keep them suitably informed about their child's attainment and progress. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt comfortable approaching the college to resolve issues, ask questions or deal with any concerns. Inspectors were provided with all the necessary information they required connected to the inspection.

***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **7. The effectiveness of the college procedures for handling complaints**

The written complaints procedure is clear and readily available on request to parents and prospective parents. It allows for a complaint to be dealt with informally but also includes formal arrangements, to ensure that complaints can be treated in a fair, objective and confidential manner. The timescales for dealing with a complaint are clearly set out, along with the procedures to be adopted in the event of an appeal. The majority of parents understand the process for dealing with complaints.

***Does the college meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## COLLEGE DETAILS

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Name of college:                   | Jamia Islamia Birmingham                            |
| DfES Number:                       | 330/6106  |
| Type of college:                   | Secondary Islamic College                           |
| Status:                            | Independent   |
| Age range of pupils:               | 11 - 22 years                                       |
| Gender of pupils:                  | Boys  |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils): | Boys: 115    Girls: 0    Total: 115                 |
| Annual fees :                      | £1,000  |
| Address of college:                | Fallows Road<br>Sparkbrook<br>Birmingham<br>B11 1PL |
| Telephone number:                  | 01217 726400  |
| Fax number:                        | 01217 726400  |
| Principal:                         | Maulana Md Rezaul Haque                             |
| Proprietor:                        | Maulana Md Rezaul Haque                             |
| Reporting Inspector:               | Mr David Rzeznik HMI                                |
| Date of inspection:                | 27 February - 2 March 2006                          |

© Crown copyright 2006. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

School inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The website lists Ofsted independent school inspection reports, together with information on the work Ofsted does in the independent sector.