

# **Inspection report**

## **Brondesbury College**

**Independent school**

**DfES ref no: 304/6076**

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

**Dates of inspection: 9 - 12 October 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 school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

### **Information about the school**

Brondesbury College is an independent, secondary day school for Muslim boys aged 11-16 in the Willesden area of North West London. The college was established in 1996 and aims to educate Muslim boys so that they can make an effective contribution to British society as citizens in an increasingly inter-connected global community. To that end it provides a broad curriculum which includes citizenship and the study of different world religions. The college seeks to develop mature young men with leadership qualities by *'providing a healthy all round education in a positive environment guided by the ethical and moral teachings of Islam.'* Its mission statement asserts that it strives to *'promote the best education in a secure Islamic environment through knowledge and application of the Qur'an and Sunnah'* yet without supporting any potentially divisive party line.

The school states its admission policy in its prospectus. The college accepts pupils from the ages of 11-16, *'regardless of race, colour or status'* but requires applicants to sit entrance tests in English, mathematics and Islamic Studies. The college is small in size with one form entry in each year and with class sizes which range from 11 to 18 pupils. At the time of the inspection there were 72 pupils on roll. It serves pupils from a number of different ethnic groups and many pupils are bi-lingual (often speaking English with Urdu or Arabic). The college admits pupils with learning difficulties but does not cater for pupils who have a statement of special educational need,

### **Summary of main findings**

Brondesbury College provides a good education for its students. It is successful in fulfilling its aims, in preparing the pupils well for the next stage of their education and in helping them to become good Muslim citizens in contemporary British society.

The college enables its students to achieve above average standards in national tests and examinations. It is a harmonious community where teachers and pupils are united in a common endeavour. The pupils are highly motivated to achieve as well as they can. The college has created a culture of high expectations and aspirations to which the pupils readily respond, which enables them to reach high standards.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and is continually developing to keep pace with the pupils' needs. The overall quality of teaching is good although some satisfactory and some excellent teaching was also observed. This factor, along with strong parental support and the pupils' willingness and determination to work hard,

enables them to make good progress in their learning. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall although the provision for cultural development is less strong. The provision for their welfare, health and safety is good. The school provides a safe and secure environment in which learning can take place. Students are well-behaved and self-disciplined. They are given good opportunities to make academic progress, to develop an Islamic lifestyle and to flourish as young people. School leaders are committed to improvement. Although there have been many changes in the teaching staff in recent times, the staffing is now much more stable.

#### **What the school does well:**

- the college achieves well above average standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 and in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations;
- the staff and other adults closely associated with the college, provide good role models for the students;
- the teachers are dedicated to the process of nurturing the pupils into an industrious and Islamic way of life and in helping them to relate Islamic teaching to everyday life in Britain today; and
- it is successful in creating a culture of high expectations and good pupil motivation and so preparing the boys for the next stage of their education.

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

- attend to the welfare issues identified in section 3;
- ensure that all appropriate checks have been carried out on all staff as indicated in section 4.

#### **Next Steps**

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

- improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring teachers employ a greater variety of teaching methods, especially those which are most effective with boys.

# **COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

## **1. The quality of education provided by the school**

### **The quality of the curriculum**

The quality of curricular provision is good and the college meets all the regulations. The curriculum has been broadened since the registration visit in 2001 to include art and geography at Key Stage 3, with business studies, history and art and design as examination options at Key Stage 4. This represents considerable improvement and, as discussion with pupils indicates, the college knows they would benefit from a programme of music education and a wider choice of options. The college follows appropriate National Curriculum content and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) syllabuses with due emphasis on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is time-tabled for all year groups, but ICT skills are not promoted fully across the curriculum. There is an appropriate emphasis on Islamic Studies and religious education and a commitment to provide an Islamic environment through knowledge and application of the Qur'an and Sunnah. This was evident in staff expectations and the way pupils conduct themselves in and out of their lessons. Arabic is taught as a modern foreign language and there is a daily time allocation of 25 minutes to collective worship. The physical education (PE) programme has been extended to include games and sports, and the school has access to the local park and other premises for some of these activities. PE has an increasingly high profile in the college. The curriculum is reviewed annually by the Curriculum Committee.

Schemes of work and short term planning are generally successful in meeting the needs of pupils of different abilities. Pupils have access to the International Board of Educational Research and Resources Life Skills programme that is linked to citizenship education, religious education and assemblies. Careers guidance is available to Years 9 and 11, and pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities through citizenship education, the school council and a range of other activities.

The college has a comprehensive curriculum policy which is supported by a detailed assessment policy and procedures. The review of subject policies and schemes of work is a current priority. There are procedures in place to assess the needs of pupils with learning needs, although at the present time only a minority of pupils have learning difficulties. The college recognises the need for similar arrangements for assessing the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. Resources, including those in the library are now adequate and further developing. The improvements include two interactive whiteboards, a new multimedia system in the information technology suite to deliver the Diploma in Digital Applications and a new astroturf surface in the playground.

The school places a great emphasis on homework, and provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities including drama and sport. External links such as those with the University College London, the University of East London, a Jewish school, the local theatre and the Work Experience Consortium further enrich the curriculum. The curriculum is also enhanced by the provision of specialist rooms for science. However, a significant number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection

questionnaire and the pupils interviewed expressed concern about the limited opportunities for external trips and visits.

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

The quality of teaching is good in the majority of subjects throughout the school and some outstanding features were observed at least on one occasion at Key Stage 4. The college meets all the regulations. However, in a few of the lessons observed, the teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Inspectors' judgements about the quality of teaching in the college match those of the leadership. Teaching has improved since the registration visit in 2001 when weaknesses were identified in the teaching of English and ICT. A good feature in the teaching was that lessons were taught by specialists who demonstrated good subject knowledge and an ability to present information accurately. The pupils' strong motivation and positive responses, together with the high expectations of parents and teachers contribute to the high achievement.

Most teachers prepare their lessons well and begin teaching with clear introductions that lead pupils to review their previous learning. Their effective questioning, appropriate use of available resources and the way they pace and manage their activities, ensure pupils develop and refine their understanding. However, additional staff providing in-class support are not always deployed effectively. Teachers know their pupils well and some seek to employ methods which match the way boys learn and which sustains their interest. Clear routines and very good relationships have been established with their pupils in and out of the classroom. This has a favourable impact on the pupils' learning, as it enables them to develop as independent and collaborative learners and to make good, and sometimes very good, progress.

However, the match of activities to pupils' needs is not consistently good. In the best lessons the teachers had high expectations, conveyed enthusiasm and provided consistent challenge. They involved pupils in the learning process in a way that developed their desire to do better. As a result, these pupils were consistently stretched and achieved highly. In the lessons where teaching was only satisfactory, the work set did not match each pupil's level of ability and learning needs sufficiently closely. The college has rightly identified this as a priority for development. In some lessons, the teachers retain too much control of the learning thus preventing the pupils developing independent learning and research skills.

The school has developed good assessment procedures, although mainly in core subjects. The use of tests when pupils enter the college, along with the day-to-day marking of work, helps staff understand their aptitudes, needs and prior attainment. However, there is an inconsistency in the quality of marking. In some cases, it provides the pupils with too little information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In some exercise books seen, too few pieces of work had been marked and the marking was not up-to-date. Too often, when marking was weak, there was little comment on the quality of the presentation of work completed. Some pupils take too little pride in their work, while others are unsure of what is expected of them in terms of the use of pencil and pen. However, record keeping is up-to-date, and the college's appraisal of the teachers work is effectively linked to its practice of monitoring of teaching along with its analysis of results and

pupils' achievement. As a result it is better able to identify the necessary training to improve the professional skills of the staff.

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

Yes.

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

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This is clearly reflected in the school's structured approach and the pupils' very positive response. The main contributory factors include the impact of the good role models provided by staff, the good standards of behaviour, a strong sense of Muslim identity demonstrated by the pupils and the strong Islamic ethos that the school provides. All of this makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and moral awareness, as was observed in an assembly led by the headteacher. The pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. This is evident in the courteous way they relate to each other, their teachers and visitors.

The school gives an equally high priority to the development of pupils' social skills through a wide range of activities relating to personal social and health education and citizenship, the school council, drama and sport. These activities, together with the study of history and different world religions and the effective links with other institutions, encourage pupils to take initiative and take on responsibilities in addition to raising their awareness of local democracy and British Parliamentary institutions. The pupils' involvement in assessment and target setting is a current priority, although opportunities for them to take responsibility for their learning are limited. Their knowledge and understanding of life in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society is also promoted through some of the above-mentioned activities, as well as through art, drama, history and external links such as those with a Jewish school and the University of East London. The pupils' cultural development although satisfactory is less strong and would benefit from further development.

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

Yes

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

The college's provision for the pupil's welfare health and safety is good. There is a series of detailed policy documents which meet requirements. A safe, healthy and strongly nurturing environment has been created for the pupils. Their welfare and general well-being is given a very high priority. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. There is an appropriate behaviour policy with a suitable system of sanctions to deal with incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The school maintains records of more serious incidents which have led to carefully considered sanctions and in certain cases suspensions and expulsions. The small scale of the school, in an essentially domestic setting, ensures that the staff know the pupils well and can supervise them effectively at all times.

The school has a new kitchen and dining room to enable it to provide healthy meals, cooked and served on the premises. There is appropriate provision for First Aid with staff qualified to administer it. First Aid boxes are appropriately stocked. Accidents are carefully recorded. The child protection policy meets requirements. The school has made the necessary provision for fire safety. The fire drill book is up-to-date and equipment is regularly checked. Minor improvements required following a recent visit from the Fire Service have been swiftly completed. The school has benefited from very recent and thorough professional advice on health and safety issues. Risk assessment forms are completed appropriately relating to the school premises and trips and visits. However, the attendance and admission registers are not kept in accordance with requirements. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 with plans to improve access and provision for those with disabilities.

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

*The college meets almost all of the regulations.*

***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 the admission register and attendance registers fully in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (paragraph (3(9))).*

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

The school is managed by the Waqf al Birr Educational Trust, a registered charity, and its work is overseen by a board of trustees and a newly formed body of governors. Day to day management of the school is in the hands of the senior management team consisting of the headteacher and a deputy headteacher.

The headteacher has been successful in appointing new, well qualified and committed teachers and the college has sufficient qualified staff to teach its broad curriculum. Effective systems of monitoring and appraisal are in place. The college has developed its capacity to train and mentor its teachers with some having successfully completed the graduate teacher programme. It has carried out many but not all of the necessary checks to confirm the suitability of the staff to work with children.

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

*The college meets almost all of the regulations.*

***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:*

- *ensure that prior to the confirmation of the appointment, appropriate checks have been carried out on all staff to confirm their previous employment*

*history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references (paragraph 4(c)).*

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

The premises and accommodation are good in many respects. The original part of the college is located in a large detached house in a residential area. This building houses a reception area, the offices of the senior staff, a staff room, two classrooms, the ICT suite and a small library. The main house has been extended and now includes, on the ground floor, a large room which is used for prayer and other activities and a large open area with cubicles which is used as a changing area for sports and PE. New windows have been installed in the original building.

A second two-storey building was erected more recently in a section of the large garden belonging to the house. It includes two science laboratories, three further classrooms along with the kitchen and dining area. The buildings are in very good condition and are well decorated both inside and outside. Between these two buildings a brand new, fenced playing area has been created with an astroturf surface which is used for football and PE lessons. There is also a reasonably good-sized hard surface area at the back of the college which is often used by the boys to play basketball at break times. Pupils report that they would like more equipment to be provided for those unable to play football or basketball in their free time. The school has no grassed area and no gymnasium. The college has access to additional facilities which have been used for drama but these are not used as fully as they might be for PE.

The classrooms are maintained in a clean and orderly state and are a suitable size for the number of pupils in each class. The flooring is mainly linoleum and is in very good condition. The furniture used by the pupils is in a good condition. Heating, lighting and ventilation are all adequate. There are some educational posters and newspaper clippings on the classroom walls but little of the pupils' work is on display. There is a suitable medical room.

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

Yes.

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

Much useful information, which includes an expression of the college's aims and ethos, is contained in the prospectus. A list of all staff along with their qualifications and the pupils' test and examination results is issued along with the prospectus. The college's policies are available on request. Parents are provided with regular and informative newsletters and a comprehensive annual report on the pupils' progress and attainment. Parents and carers report that they are generally happy with the quality of the information they receive and with the progress that the boys make.

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

Yes.



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

The school has a detailed written complaints policy which sets out the procedures it will follow in the management of any complaint. It contains information on all of the specific elements required by the regulations. There have been very few complaints from parents.

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

Yes.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Brondesbury College
DfES Number:	304/6076
Type of school:	Faith (Muslim)
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	72
Annual fees (day pupils):	£6,100.00
Address of school:	8 Brondesbury Park London NW6 7BT
Telephone number:	020 883 04522
Fax number:	020 8830 4523
Email address:	info@bcbcollege.com
Headteacher:	Dr Nasim Butt
Proprietor:	Dr Yusuf Islam
Reporting Inspector:	Ian Hartland HMI
Date of inspection:	9 - 12 October 2006

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