



Islamia Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101574
Local Authority Brent
Inspection number 295317
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Parker

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	129 Salusbury Road
School category	Voluntary aided		London
Age range of pupils	4–11		NW6 6PE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02073722532
Number on roll (school)	205	Fax number	02073722425
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Akhtar Raja
		Headteacher	Mrs Zahida Shaheem (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2000		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006	Inspection number 295317
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Islamia was the first Muslim primary school in England. It will expand in January 2007 to include the pupils from a neighbouring Muslim school. Most of the pupils speak a language other than English at home. About one in five of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Although there are fewer pupils with learning difficulties than in most schools, there are more with statements of special needs. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion taking free school meals is more than twice the national average. An acting headteacher has been leading the school since September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for the pupils. They achieve well and reach above average standards because the teaching is good. Effective learning, and good personal development and well-being are made possible by the calm and purposeful atmosphere that prevails throughout the school.

The results of 2006 national tests at the end of Year 6, were well above average in English, mathematics and science. These pupils make good progress from the end of Year 2, where results have been below average for the last three years. Currently, standards in Year 2 are much higher and pupils are making good progress because the teaching is good. Children in the reception class make a secure start to school life.

Lessons are well planned to provide pupils of all abilities with interesting tasks that motivate them. Many lessons generate enthusiasm and an eagerness to learn. When Year 5 pupils were investigating vibration and sound, they became very excited. By making a piece of string taut, between two plastic cups, they discovered they could talk to one another. The teachers mark the pupils' work and test them so that they know how well they are doing. This provides them with very useful information to set the pupils targets and help them to plan work that matches the pupils' needs. However, the pupils' progress from the Reception class to Year 6 is not recorded in a manner that allows the teachers, subject co-ordinators or the acting headteacher to check that pupils are on course to reach the levels they should.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They behave well and contribute well to lessons. Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. Parents are kept satisfactorily informed, but have few opportunities to become actively involved in school life.

Over the last few years the school has taken steps to make improvements in response to the last inspection. It has been successful in improving the teaching and the curriculum for the youngest children. Attendance has increased but remains below average. Subject co-ordinators now play a satisfactory role in maintaining standards in their subjects, but they are not sufficiently involved in identifying priorities for improvement or monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. The acting headteacher, in a very short time in charge, has identified the need to establish a more coherent approach to self-evaluation and school improvement planning. Although at an early stage, her plans place the school in a stronger position to build on its improvements since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more effective and extensive use of monitoring to create a sharp and coherent approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Extend assessment arrangements to ensure pupils are on track to achieve their potential.
- Foster greater involvement of parents, particularly to raise levels of attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and, as a result, standards are above average by the end of Year 6. A minority of pupils begin school with limited pre-school experience and some speak little English. The children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception year. Currently, the youngest children are settling into school life and many are making good gains in their language, mathematical and social skills. Those who begin school at the early stages of learning English make good progress. By the end of Year 2, although standards have been below average for the last three years, stronger teaching means that pupils are now making good progress.

Good behaviour and an ethos in which pupils feel safe and well supported create a desire for learning. Pupils achieve particularly well between the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Over the last few years standards in English and mathematics have been higher than in science. In 2006, the results of national tests in science improved because far more pupils reached the higher level. Four out of every ten pupils achieved the higher level in English, mathematics and science in the 2006 national tests. Pupils develop a good range of skills that will equip them well for later life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The overwhelming majority of pupils enjoy school, work hard and do their best. They are polite, well behaved and show respect to their teachers. Conversations with the pupils indicate that they feel safe at school. Although one or two expressed concern about occasional bullying and the way that this is dealt with, the school does not tolerate it and none was seen during the inspection.

The school is particularly effective in promoting the pupils' spiritual and moral development. The Imam and school staff provide regular opportunities for prayer and the teaching of the Islamic faith every day. As a result, pupils are considerate and thoughtful. Pupils have opportunities to support charities and play a part in the wider community. Some older children take on roles as prefects but the school council has not met this year to allow more pupils to assume the types of responsibility of which they are capable.

Pupils understand the need for a healthy life-style and those in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 benefit from daily milk and fruit. However, opportunities for physical exercise in Years 1 to 6 are currently an hour less than the suggested minimum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are well taught throughout the school. Teaching in the Reception class successfully helps children settle into full time education. Staff have established positive relationships with their pupils who are increasingly confident in tackling the good variety of learning experiences provided in the classroom and the outdoor play area. A significant minority of the children entering Reception speak little English. The teachers' careful assessments and the good opportunities for children to listen and speak in a variety of contexts accelerate this aspect of their learning effectively.

In Years 1 to 6 lessons are carefully planned and proceed at a brisk pace because teachers always make it clear to the pupils what they are going to learn. They question perceptively to check pupils' understanding, occasionally using other languages when children lack confidence in English. The teachers' good knowledge of individuals helps ensure that work is matched carefully to pupils' abilities. Work is marked regularly and most teachers provide a helpful commentary that tells pupils how to improve. Teaching assistants work effectively to support pupils' learning, often working with those with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum, and this contributes to pupils' academic and personal development. The Foundation Stage curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection and now covers all areas of learning. Pupils have good opportunities to use the outside play area to extend learning. In Years 1 to 6 the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively and pupils apply these successfully in subjects such as science and history. They also make good use of their ICT skills across the curriculum. A satisfactory range of cultural reference points is evident within displays and pupils' work. A good variety of educational visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential experience in Spain. However, there are few extra-curricular clubs and activities to that extend pupils' learning outside school hours.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Although the school is a safe and caring place for the pupils to learn, some aspects of care and guidance are not as coherent or robust as they should be. For example, procedures for following up absence are not sufficiently rigorous.

Child protection arrangements are up to date and the school has taken appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the pupils. Parents receive a satisfactory range of information, but opportunities to become actively involved in school life are limited.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers assess the progress of the pupils in their class and set them targets. However, these activities are carried out in isolation because the school does not maintain a comprehensive record of the progress each pupil makes from beginning school in the Reception class to leaving at the end of Year 6.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since recently taking up the role, the imminent expansion of the school has dominated the work of the acting headteacher. Nevertheless, she has rightly identified the need to pull together the many pockets of monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement planning currently carried out by teachers and subject co-ordinators. Although producing some benefits these activities are not sufficiently coherent to achieve the excellence to which the school aspires.

Currently, subject co-ordinators have a satisfactory oversight of how well their subject is planned, taught and assessed. However, monitoring activities have become infrequent over the last year. The acting headteacher has embarked on establishing a more systematic and rigorous approach to make sure these important tasks provide information to improve the school's performance.

Governors support the school well. They challenge its performance and utilise consultants to advise them. They have a clear vision for the future development of the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to inspectors about your school and your work. You go to a good school. You told us that you feel safe and enjoy lessons. You know it is important to work hard and learn new things. You behave well and listen carefully to your teachers. As a result you are doing well in lessons. Most of you concentrate on your work and are making good progress in English, mathematics and science. The teachers make lessons interesting and lively. I particularly enjoyed seeing some of the older children finding things out in science.

The school council has not met this year but there are plans for it to start again in January. It is important that you have this opportunity to express your views about the school and contribute to the school community. Attendance has improved over the last few years but we would like to be even higher. We have asked the school to involve your parents more.

The governors and teachers want to make the school even better. To do this we have asked them to keep a better record of your progress so that they can check you are on course to do as well as you can. We have also asked them to make sure that they frequently check how well the school is doing and have a better plan for making improvements.

We really enjoyed being in your school and hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector