



Gloucestershire Islamic Secondary School for Girls

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number 916/6073
Unique Reference Number 115810
Inspection number 296814
Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Mrs Michèle Messaoudi

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 11-16	Published 6 February 2007	Reference no. 296814
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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

Gloucestershire Islamic Secondary School for Girls provides full-time education for girls aged eleven to sixteen years and was set up in 1994 to serve the local Muslim population of mainly Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritages. The vast majority of pupils are at advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school's stated mission is to strive for academic and moral excellence through the teachings of Islam. It aims to ensure that pupils *'enjoy their life at school, and develop a love for learning and a strong desire to continue their education as a lifetime experience; and acquire a moral attitude to life through taqwa (conscious awareness) and practice of Divine Guidance in all their affairs and transactions.'* The school was last inspected in May 2001.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides its pupils with a good education. It successfully meets its aims and, as a result, pupils make good progress, achieve high standards and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as reflected in their exemplary behaviour, their confidence and their strong sense of identity. The school complies with nearly all of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It successfully balances a broad range of secular and Islamic subjects. In Key Stage 3, pupils study English, mathematics, science, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), crafts and physical education (PE). Pupils take the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9. In Key Stage 4, they follow courses in nine subjects including Urdu and Religious Education/Islamic studies examined at GCSE level. Urdu is taught from Year 7, both as a modern language and as a tool for studying Islamic texts. Arabic is taught from Year 7 to Year 9. A tailor-made Islamic programme forms one third of the curriculum and is taught throughout the school by specialist staff who have qualifications in Islamic theology. It comprises studies in Qur'an and *tajweed* (melodic style of

Qur'anic recitation), *tafseer* (explanation of the meaning of Qur'anic verses), *hadith* (literature regarding Prophet Muhammad's example), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *aqida* (belief) and Islamic history. Islamic studies include the study of the main world religions, taught in comparison with Islam. The examinations in most of these subjects are marked internally and moderated by an external body of experts. Provision for PE is satisfactory and includes a good balance of skills and games. The school has planned to introduce art from the next academic year and suitably qualified staff have been recruited in partnership with a local specialist arts college. An adequate range of resources supports the curriculum, including a large ICT suite and a science laboratory. However, the use of ICT in all subjects is under-developed. The school is taking practical steps to improve the resources for practical science by advertising for a technician to prepare and support experiments. A fairly good range of educational visits and field trips enhance the curriculum but there are few regular extra-curricular activities to extend pupils' skills and enrich their learning experience. This was noted by parents and students in their pre-inspection questionnaires. The curriculum is suitably planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Consequently, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education and the majority move on to college or sixth form.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good, with much that is outstanding, showing a marked improvement since the last inspection. It owes much to the dedication of the staff, their high level of commitment to developing each pupil's potential, and the school's emphasis on professional development. The staff foster positive relationships in the classroom resulting in a productive learning atmosphere. Time is well managed in lessons, enabling pupils to cover a lot of work. Teachers' very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and standard of work encourage pupils to have equally high expectations of what they can achieve themselves. Consequently, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Where the teaching is at its best, it communicates knowledge effectively, encourages pupils to think independently and promotes good intellectual development. In these lessons, teachers use a range of teaching methods very effectively to motivate and enthuse the pupils. Consequently, pupils are actively engaged in their learning, relish rising to a high level of challenge and make outstanding progress. There is a good range of strategies for testing and assessing pupils. The school records identify pupils' levels of attainment and chart their progress as they move through the school. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of their pupils' needs and provide them with clear academic guidance. Some teachers consistently show pupils how to improve their work through high quality marking.

As a result of the good curricular provision and the good teaching, pupils' ability to learn is effectively nurtured. They develop a useful range of skills including presentation, communication, as well as interpersonal, thinking and research skills that help them fulfil their potential and prepare them well for adult life. However, these skills are not developed to the same degree in all subjects,

especially as there is no whole school approach to developing literacy in all subjects.

Through close monitoring of their learning, pupils make good progress and achieve well in their GCSE examinations.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school places a high priority on moral education and emphasises that the Islamic ethos promotes the generic skills of punctuality, honesty, truthfulness, politeness and good manners. The quality of pupils' behaviour and responsiveness in class shows that the school successfully promotes these values. Pupils attribute their enjoyment of school life to the good teaching and the disciplined but friendly atmosphere. They feel well cared for. Their attendance and punctuality are good. They take pride in their work, as shown by their good standard of presentation and aesthetically pleasing displays around the school. They form positive relationships with others, and communicate with visitors in a confident, friendly and courteous manner. They show consideration for others in and out of lessons, and instances of bullying are rare. They show initiative when given the opportunity. They extend their communication skills by contributing to a bi-annual newsletter, taking part in the production of an annual play and singing *nashids* on special occasions. They support a range of fund-raising activities. They have participated in sponsored walks for endangered animal species and, more recently, in an Islamic Veil Exhibition held at a local museum. However, through a recent consultation, they have expressed higher aspirations and broader ambitions. As a result, a school council has been formed.

Although pupils learn about the historical background of present public institutions, there is no citizenship programme in place. The school has identified the development of such a programme as a priority. Pupils are well prepared for life in a multicultural, multifaith society through the curricular provision and educational visits. The provision for careers education is satisfactory, but the school, parents and pupils all recognise that it could be improved by structuring the programme better and extending the range of work experience placements.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Procedures aimed at ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils in all circumstances are good. The school has a zero tolerance of bad behaviour, and deals with incidents promptly and firmly. Consequently, pupils feel safe and

enjoy working in an orderly and disciplined environment. Arrangements to ensure child protection are suitable. First Aid provision is particularly good as many staff are suitably qualified and the school provides First Aid training for all Year 10 pupils. Pupils feel that the school encourages them to make healthy choices. In a science lesson, they demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the complex issues related to the harmful and beneficial effects of some drugs. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school undertakes the appropriate checks with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm the staff's suitability to work with children. However, not all the other checks that should be made prior to confirming their appointment are undertaken. The school is already remedying the situation by updating its recruitment procedure and its personnel files.

School's premises and accommodation

The quality of the teaching accommodation is good and makes a positive contribution to the curriculum. The school is planning to maximise the use of specialist areas such as the ICT suite and science laboratory. It has plans to set up a library. Pupils feel that the playground could be developed into a more pleasant recreational space.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has good communication procedures. An interim report and an annual report provide continuous and detailed information on each pupil's progress. However, the quality of teachers' comments is variable. Consequently, not all parents feel well informed of their daughters' progress. The best subject reports clearly state what the pupil can do, cannot do and needs to do to improve. In response to the parents' wish for greater involvement in school matters, the school plans to form an advisory committee. The school's self-evaluation in preparation for the inspection provides an honest and accurate overview of all academic and pastoral aspects of school life.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a suitable procedure for dealing with complaints.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (standard 2) and must:

- improve its provision for citizenship to provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, appropriate checks are carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references, and that such information is taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- continue to disseminate the best teaching practice and develop staff through a rigorous training programme
- continue to develop the standard of literacy in all subjects
- continue to build up its resources and develop the use of ICT across the curriculum
- continue to improve its careers education programme.

School details

Name of school	Gloucestershire Islamic Secondary School for Girls
DfES number	916/6073
Unique reference number	115810
Type of school	Muslim Day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 1994
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	68
Annual fees (day pupils)	£800 (Year 7-Year 10), £950 (Year 11)
Address of school	Sinope Street Gloucester Gloucestershire GL1 4AW
Telephone number	01452 300465
Email address	iacademy@yahoo.co.uk
Principal	Mr Abdullah Patel
Proprietor	Gloucester Muslim Welfare Association Limited
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Dates of inspection	11-12 January 2007