

Al-Furqaan Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	382/6019
Unique Reference Number	131131
Inspection number	301487
Inspection dates	28-29 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Patricia Cox AI

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).

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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

Al-Furqaan in Dewsbury is a faith school, which 'strives to merge Islamic values and teachings onto the 21st century educational map with a positive outlook.....an education that includes a daily emphasis on social, cultural and moral values.' There are 138 pupils, between the ages of four and 11, with 10% more girls than boys. There are no pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and none with statements of special educational needs. All pupils subscribe to the Islamic faith and family backgrounds are mostly from the Indian subcontinent. The school was previously inspected in June 2003 and has grown in size since then, with 22 additional pupils.

Evaluation of the school

Al-Furqaan School is a satisfactory school with some strengths. It provides its pupils with a satisfactory education, and they make sound progress, reaching high standards in English, mathematics and science. They behave well because there is a strong focus on their spiritual and moral development and the school takes satisfactory care of them. The school meets most of the regulations, and all of those regarding the curriculum, the provision of information for parents and carers, and its procedures for handling complaints.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and it is organised well to meet the school's ethos and its religious nature. There are sound policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Much of the curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and materials from the national strategies are used for English and mathematics. Many of the other subjects use the national advisory schemes to support planning. The Foundation Stage curriculum is used as a basis for the curriculum in the Reception class. There is a personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, which is founded on the Qu'ran and reflects the school aims. A strong feature is the emphasis on cleanliness and healthy living.

The timetables show a satisfactory balance between the subjects, although there are times when pupils spend a lengthy time on one subject, for example two hours of

mathematics in one class. Although the curriculum covers all the areas of learning required, there is a heavy emphasis on the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and Islamic studies. The school recognises that there are weaknesses in its provision for physical, aesthetic and creative studies, partly due to shortcomings in the accommodation. The outside area limits the teaching of games. Pupils do physical education in their school uniform, which restricts their movement.

The curriculum for the Reception class is based on the national Foundation Stage curriculum and the classroom is organised with suitable role-play areas. However, there is too little emphasis on learning through play and there are no facilities to provide the outdoor education that is an aspect of this curriculum. Throughout the school there are sufficient resources for information and communication technology (ICT) but they are used very little in support of pupils' learning. There are no timetabled sessions for pupils to develop their discrete ICT skills or to ensure that classes use the facilities regularly.

Standardised tests, the school's own subject tests and nationally recognised tests are used to check the pupils' progress, which is satisfactory overall. The Year 2 pupils are assessed using the national teacher assessments and Year 6 pupils take the National Curriculum tests, which are marked externally. The school therefore has a bank of reliable data to show pupils' attainment and the progress they are making from Years 1 to 6. However, it does not use this information consistently, particularly in planning lessons. Although the children in Reception are assessed individually against national expectations, there is not an adequate summary of children's attainment at the beginning or end of the year. The school is therefore unable to demonstrate the overall progress that pupils make during their time at the school.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils generally build satisfactorily in Key Stages 1 and 2 on the skills and knowledge they have when they enter Year 1. Throughout the school, discipline is mainly good and therefore pupils behave well and concentrate on their work. In the better lessons, the explanations are good and there is a brisk pace. The tasks and activities are matched to the different groups in the class. Teaching is lively and enthusiastic, involving the pupils and keeping their full attention. On some occasions, the teacher shares the purpose of the lesson with the pupils so that they know what they are to learn, but this good practice is inconsistent. Teachers have an adequate understanding of the level at which many pupils are working and the lessons are mostly aimed at this.

There are some shortcomings in teaching and learning, often because many of the teachers are inexperienced. There is some lack of teaching expertise and some occasional weak subject knowledge. Teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory because it does not provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their understanding or to learn new skills well enough. In most of the lessons observed the pupils had little opportunity to discuss their ideas or explain their thinking. In many of the satisfactory lessons the work is often identical for all pupils in the class and consequently the more able are not sufficiently challenged and the less able find the

tasks very difficult. Most activities are designed for pupils to work individually and there is little evidence of pupils learning or working independently or in groups. Teachers generally use resources adequately, although the school has a limited range in some subjects. There is no library and many of the books available are out of date or in poor condition.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. It meets the school ethos. Pupils' behaviour is good; they help and respect each other. They are polite and greet each other respectfully. Regular assemblies and prayer sessions are held that provide pupils with good spiritual and moral development. Pupils have great respect for their teachers and express their affiliation to their school and religion. PSHE is covered mostly in the Islamic studies and partly in other subjects. The school has recently organised an educational visit for its pupils although such visits are not frequent. Pupils are not given enough information about British public institutions and services. The school's curriculum includes topics about the world religions and other cultures but these are insufficiently focused on promoting tolerance and harmony.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The welfare, health and safety provision is satisfactory. Pupils feel that they are safe and secure in the school. The school ensures pupils are healthy and enjoy their lessons. Anti-bullying, behaviour, child protection, health and safety, school outing and first aid policies are appropriate and effective. The school has a three year accessibility plan which fulfils the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. There is a food policy to encourage healthy eating, although the policy is not always reflected in the pupils' lunchboxes. Regular fire drill tests and fire risk assessments are carried out. Health and safety risk assessments are also undertaken, which include testing of portable electrical equipment. However, the gymnastics mats are worn and present a hazard; the school has subsequently removed them.

The school has a designated person as child protection officer. However, this officer and the staff are not trained. The school has not ensured that the whole school community has easy access to the name of the designated person and those who are trained in first aid. The admission register is kept appropriately but attendance registers are not completed carefully enough, and often do not use the appropriate entries for absence.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has adopted a suitable recruitment policy. Before confirming appointments of staff, most checks are carried out on their suitability. Appropriate

references are sought and checks are made to confirm staff qualifications. However, the school is still waiting for some checks from the Criminal Records Bureau and in a few cases has not completed these before confirming the appointment of staff.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory. The hall is a very good size and there are classrooms for each year group, although some, particularly the space for the Years 5 and 6 girls, are too small. Many classrooms have restricted space for practical activities. Nevertheless, the accommodation is in a satisfactory state of repair, is clean and tidy, and decoration is also satisfactory. However, the outside play area is very small and therefore groups of pupils are taken outside in rotation. They only have access to this area once a week; if it is raining they miss their opportunity. Playtime for the majority is in the school hall, which does not allow pupils to have fresh air or sufficient exercise. Physical education lessons are also mainly taken in the hall, restricting the curriculum for this subject. Ventilation is generally adequate, but there is no additional ventilation in the ICT suite.

The school has washrooms in each area so that pupils can have easy access, but there are insufficient toilets and washbasins for the Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils since the school has expanded. There is only one toilet for the many female staff. There are now no appropriate facilities for pupils who may become ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents. There is a prospectus which gives appropriate information about the school's ethos, curriculum, staffing and all its operating policies. The school sends informative written reports to parents annually and arranges meetings with them to review their child's progress. Parents are informed about their children's attainment and progress. In the pre-inspection questionnaire which was sent to parents, the majority expressed their satisfaction with school policy about resolving issues or answering any questions or concerns.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school meets all requirements for handling complaints. The complaints policy has all the necessary stages and requires that written records are kept and are confidential. There has only been one written complaint this year and the records show that the matter was resolved satisfactorily.

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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that all teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of the pupils, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- provide classroom resources of adequate quality, quantity and range and ensure that they are used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

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

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d))
- assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions. (paragraph 2(e)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DfES guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007)* (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure that have been subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- ensure that all classrooms are appropriate in size to allow effective teaching. (paragraph 5(j))
- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs, taking account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations (paragraph 5(k))

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations (paragraph 5(l))
- improve ventilation of the ICT suite (paragraph 5(p))
- ensure there are appropriate arrangements for outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

School details

Name of school	Al-Furqaan Preparatory School		
DfES number	382/6019		
Unique reference number	131131		
Type of school	Muslim day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1996		
Age range of pupils	4-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 63	Girls: 75	Total: 138
Annual fees (day pupils)	£480		
Address of school	Drill Hall House Bath Street Dewsbury West Yorkshire WF13 2JR		
Telephone number	01924 453661		
Fax number	01924 524070		
Email address	alfurqaanprep@yahoo.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Aswat		
Proprietor	Mr Y Bham		
Reporting inspector	Patricia Cox AI		
Dates of inspection	28-29 June 2007		