

Birmingham Muslim School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	3306102
Unique Reference Number	133521
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Inspection dates	26-27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Sheila Ann Boyle 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

Birmingham Muslim School is an independent day school that provides full-time education for boys and girls aged 4 to 11 years of Islamic faith and cultural background. It opened in 2001 and received registration in 2005. Currently there are 126 pupils on roll. The mobility of pupils is high, many enter at times other than reception and some leave before the natural time of transfer. Pupils are at various stages of learning English as a second language (EAL), but the majority are at an advanced stage. The school aims to provide its pupils with an excellent standard of education, and to strive for moral excellence through the teaching of Islam.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides an inadequate quality of education. The curriculum including the Islamic curriculum is not well planned; this contributes to weaknesses in teaching and consequently pupil's progress in lessons, and over time, is often too slow. Since the school was registered there has been a higher than expected turnover of staff which has delayed development in a number of areas. The staff demonstrate a satisfactory standard of care for the pupils; however, essential elements are missing from the school's procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. Provision for spiritual and moral development is satisfactory but provision for social and cultural development is inadequate. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory but attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Quality of education

The curriculum is inadequate and planning at all levels lacks clarity, as a result the staff have difficulty adapting their schemes of work to meet the individual needs of the diverse groups of pupils they teach. Provision for Quranic reading is unsatisfactory and the schemes of work are not up to the required standard. The rules of Tajweed are not observed. Plans for other subjects do not have the structure needed to ensure continuity and progress within key stages and across the school. It is unclear how pupils of differing ability will develop skills over time. In too many lessons the same work is set and often the more able find the work too easy whilst the less able find it too difficult. Too much is left to individual teachers to decide what to teach. New staff are left to find their own way, as no one has oversight of the curriculum or evaluates how effective it is. Planning in the Foundation Stage has

significant weaknesses. There are no long term plans indicating how the school intends to develop the children in all areas of their learning and children have few planned opportunities to learn through investigative activities or structured play. There are no after school clubs, however, a satisfactory range of educational trips help pupils to gain an understanding of their local and wider environment.

The quality of teaching is inadequate although there are some examples of satisfactory teaching in both secular and Islamic subjects. The limitations of the school's long and medium-term planning and the absence of effective assessment leaves teachers without the guidance they need to plan effectively. As a result work is not well matched to the needs of pupils and they make inadequate progress. In the main the staff work hard to promote pupils' learning but a number of teachers are teaching subjects for which they have no formal training. The teaching methods used in many lessons do not sufficiently engage or motivate the pupils. There is an over reliance on direct instruction and the completion of work sheets and, too often, opportunities for discussion, debate and independent learning are missed.

Assessment of pupils' work is inadequate and is not sufficiently frequent or rigorous to inform future planning or enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress. Although a small number of pupils in 2005 and in 2006 reached the national average in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the school has no data to indicate what progress they made from the time they started at the school. The quality of marking is too variable. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own work and they receive too little guidance on what they need to do to improve future work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate, although arrangements for their spiritual and moral development are satisfactory. The school is successful in promoting satisfactory behaviour amongst its pupils and respect for themselves, parents, elders and others. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are variable and in spite of efforts made by the school, both remain unsatisfactory. The few pupils who are given responsibility, like class monitors, fulfil their duties well. Teachers provide appropriate role models for Islamic life and this has a positive impact on pupils' moral development. Pupils have a clear understanding of their Islamic identity, which is reinforced by the midday congregational prayer. In lessons and other settings, pupils have too few opportunities to contribute to discussion or make choices and work independently. They have few opportunities to air their views or have a say on how the school is run, for example, there is no school council. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to learn about their own faith and culture but have limited opportunities to learn about others' faiths and cultures. They have only a limited knowledge of public institutions and services in England. This was demonstrated in an English comprehension lesson on 'The changing of the guard' where many did not know where this ceremony takes place or who is being guarded. Most of the pupils come from the local multi-ethnic

community, however they have few opportunities to mix with their peers or participate in wider community initiatives.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the overall welfare, health and safety of the pupils is inadequate, although the staff do demonstrate a satisfactory standard of day-to-day care for the pupils. Essential elements of policies relating to child protection are not in place. The child protection officer's training is out of date, although she plans to update her training in the autumn term. Arrangements to ensure the building is safe are satisfactory and there is adequate supervision of pupils during the school day and on educational trips. Risk assessments are completed for activities and trips outside school. Procedures relating to the administration of first aid are incomplete and do not meet the regulations. The school keeps appropriate records of incidents that occur and sanctions that are imposed when pupils misbehave. Staff are generally successful in promoting healthy living. Pupils are encouraged to bring healthy lunches and there are satisfactory facilities for outdoor games and recreation. The school's admission and attendance registers are incomplete and do not meet the requirements of the regulation. The school has not drawn up a three year written plan to increase the accessibility of the premises and the curriculum, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act (2001).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The procedures for appointment of staff do not meet the regulations. Although most staff have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with the pupils, a number of checks are still pending. The school does not have a suitable recruitment policy and not all the other checks that need to be made, prior to confirmation of their appointment are undertaken. Checks to confirm identity and previous employment history are not in place for all staff. In some cases no references have been sought or checks made to confirm their qualifications.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is located on the first floor of a factory unit, which it shares with a carpet company. The accommodation has several classrooms of various sizes. Some are too small for the number of pupils being taught in them. There is also an information and communication technology room, a prayer room which is also used for indoor play activities, a small kitchen, two offices and washrooms for boys and girls. Staff have no washroom facilities. The premises are approached by way of a long drive which is shared with the factory and a community sports complex. The school's car park is also the access route to the factory's storage units at the rear of the building. The outside play area and access to it are securely fenced off from the main car park. The school does not have facilities for pupils who are ill. The proprietors recognise the limitations of the accommodation and are actively seeking new premises.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents and others with some useful information about the school, and its curriculum and ethos. However, important elements are omitted, including, information about the pupils' academic performance during the previous year, details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure and information about the staff employed at the school and their qualifications. Although written reports are sent to parents each year, these do not provide them with enough information about the progress and attainment in the main subjects taught. The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt comfortable about approaching the school for information or if they had a problem. However, some felt that they were not kept informed about their child's progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints procedure has been revised recently. It is now available on request to parents and also to parents of prospective pupils. It allows for a complaint to be dealt with informally but also includes formal arrangements, to ensure that complaints are 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.

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:

- prepare and implement a curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work (paragraph 1(2))
- provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs (paragraph 1(2)(b))
- ensure the curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i))
- ensure that teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 1(3)(a))
- ensure that teaching encourages pupils to apply intellectual, physical and creative efforts and to show interest in their work and to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 1(3)(b))
- ensure lessons are well planned and effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used (paragraph 1(3)(c))

- ensure that teachers have a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- ensure teachers have appropriate knowledge and understanding of all of the subject they teach (paragraph 1(3)(e))
- ensure there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and that information from such assessment is used to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

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

- improve the ways in which pupils show initiative and understand how they can contribute to community life (paragraph 2(c))
- 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 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))
- prepare a written policy on first aid and ensure it is implemented consistently (paragraph 3(6))
- maintain the admission register and 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:

- ensure that prior to the confirmation of their appointment, all staff at the school and any member named as the proprietor have been subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b))
- ensure that prior to the confirmation of their appointment all staff, have appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and ensure that such information is taken into account before their appointment is confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

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))
- ensure there are sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils (paragraph 5(k))
- ensure there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- make available particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- make available details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- make available information on the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k))
- provide parents with more information about the progress and attainment of their child in the main subject areas taught (paragraph 6(5)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

School details

Name of school	Birmingham Muslim School
DfES number	330/6102
Unique reference number	133521
Type of school	Primary
Status	Independent
Date school opened	2001
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 58 Girls: 68 Total: 126
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1375
Address of school	Bisley Works Golden Hillock Road Sparkbrook Birmingham West Midlands B11 2PZ
Telephone number	0121 7668129
Fax number	0121 7530587
Email address	aishalaws@yahoo.co.uk
Headteacher	Mrs A Abdrabba
Proprietor	Mr G Abdrabba
Reporting inspector	Sheila Ann Boyle AI
Dates of inspection	26-27 June 2007