

Leicester Islamic Academy

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	856/6007
Unique Reference Number	120335
Inspection number	301556
Inspection dates	17-18 May 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).

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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

Leicester Islamic Academy is an independent primary school providing full-time education to Muslim boys and girls aged three to eleven years. It opened in 1982. It has expanded over the years and is housed in a former grammar school building in a residential part of Leicester. From September 2007, it will be separate from the associated secondary school that has just obtained voluntary-aided status. There are 369 pupils of Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani and Somali heritages. The majority of pupils are bilingual or at advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school was last inspected in 2002 and the Foundation Stage in 1999. It aims to *'prepare pupils for their lives as adults in an increasingly secular, materialistic and technological world. Pupils should be capable of carrying the Islamic beliefs, practices and values as enshrined in the Qur'an and Sunnah (example of Prophet Muhammad) into their everyday lives.'*

Evaluation of the school

Leicester Islamic Academy provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It has been successful in improving the quality of its teaching since the last inspection, as a result of which pupils make at least satisfactory progress. This owes much to the commitment of the headteacher and staff who strive to raise standards despite limited resources. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted, as reflected in pupils' responsible behaviour and mature attitude to learning. Although the school complies with most of the regulations, it falls short of a number of regulations related to welfare, health and safety. Consequently, provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced with a deliberate emphasis on literacy and numeracy to provide a secure foundation for other subjects. In the Reception class, the school follows the Foundation Stage guidelines and gradually introduces more formal literacy and numeracy lessons in the summer term. The school has addressed all the issues raised in the last Early Years inspection. The planning of the primary curriculum is generally satisfactory, following commercial schemes of work that are based on the National Curriculum and ensure continuity

and progression of learning. However, there is no appropriate system in place to assess the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties, so that the curriculum is not always suitably modified to meet their needs. Speaking and listening skills are promoted effectively and reading skills are well taught. The school has correctly identified creative learning as a priority for improvement and has timetabled weekly sessions for expressive writing. However, there is no consistent approach to developing literacy across the curriculum. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to develop writing in other subjects. Pupils have regular opportunities to sing *nasheeds* (Islamic songs) and they experience good quality art and design and technology activities. The programme of personal, social and health education reflects the Islamic ethos of the school. Resources are inadequate in range and quantity, particularly in literacy, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education, as well as Islamic studies in Key Stage 2. Pupils' learning is enriched through a small number of educational visits, but there are no extra-curricular activities. Some parents feel that their children would benefit from a wider range of school outings.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with much that is good. Teaching has improved markedly over the last few years as a result of the school's commitment to the continuous professional development of teachers. All teachers prepare well for their lessons, follow an agreed lesson structure and foster very good relationships in the class. Consequently, pupils respond positively to the well established routines, their behaviour is good and they have a good attitude to learning. Staff make effective use of the available resources. The best teaching was briskly paced, based on detailed planning that matched tasks closely to pupils' needs to achieve well defined learning objectives. Where the teaching was satisfactory rather than good, it did not match each pupil's needs as closely and used questioning that was not sufficiently probing to stretch pupils' thinking. Where the teaching was weaker, introductions were too long, which resulted in pupils losing interest and misbehaving, or the lesson lacked focus as learning objectives were too vague. Classroom assistants are not always deployed effectively. However, when they are, they support pupils' learning well.

Assessment is satisfactory. Marking is regular but does not always show pupils how to improve. In the best lessons, the teaching consolidates pupils' learning and understanding at the end of the lesson very effectively. Some pupils understand how assessment helps them improve their learning. They know how well they achieve and how their learning targets help them move towards their next step. However, this practice is not generalised across the school. The system currently used to track each pupil's progress is not rigorous enough to give teachers all the information they need to ensure that pupils make good, rather than satisfactory progress. This makes it difficult to identify and help those pupils who may be underachieving.

As a result of the satisfactory curriculum and satisfactory teaching, pupils make at least satisfactory progress. They achieved highly in the 2006 Key Stage 1 and 2 national tests. However, pupils with specific learning difficulties cannot achieve as well as they should as the school neither assesses nor provides for their needs.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with the spiritual and social strands being particular strengths. As a result, pupils are well-behaved, confident, friendly and considerate. The school is particularly successful in fostering pupils' emotional well-being through the 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' (SEAL) programme. Pupils are calm and reflective. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They take responsibility for their actions and consider the needs of others. They form positive relationships and work sensibly and productively in pairs and in groups, as well as independently. They have many opportunities to take on responsibilities and gain maturity. For example, they provide feedback on the efficiency with which members of the school council fulfil their duties on the playground. The council oversees the recycling of plastics and has helped to plan the re-designing of the playground. Pupils' cultural development is well promoted through art and design and technology, as well as other subjects. For example, they have painted their interpretations of Turkish designs on tiles and they have made models of ancient Greek buildings. They are well prepared for their future economic well-being by developing useful skills in team work, problem solving and organisation, as well as good standards of literacy and numeracy. However, their ICT skills are insufficiently developed as they have had restricted access to computers.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

This aspect of the provision is inadequate. Whilst teachers provide good day-to-day care, the fragmented responsibilities for welfare, health and safety issues result in policies which are not fully compliant with the regulations. There are weaknesses in a number of key policies which have not been drafted with appropriate regard to DfES guidance. This is the case with the policies aiming at minimising bullying and identifying health and safety risks around the site and during educational visits. The anti-bullying policy does not identify strategies to avoid bullying. Nevertheless, owing to the good provision of an Islamic ethos and to the effective implementation of the behaviour policy, bullying is rare. It is also dealt with promptly and effectively when it occurs. Consequently, pupils feel safe. The school is updating its policies and procedures to comply with the latest national guidance on '*Safeguarding children and safer recruitment*.' Teachers carry out risk assessments before school outings but not sufficiently thoroughly. They also carry out frequent risk assessments of their classrooms. However, the school does not risk assess the whole site effectively, resulting in a number of hazards not being attended to. Although the secondary school that occupies part of the same building has been deemed by the fire authority to have a satisfactory level of fire safety, the school has yet to provide its own evidence that it has a satisfactory level of fire safety, as identified by a fire risk assessment and a report from the fire authority.

Pupils understand clearly what constitutes healthy living and this is supported by the school's healthy snack policy. However, opportunities for physical exercise are

limited.

The school has yet to draft a three-year plan showing how it will improve accessibility to the premises to fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The recruitment procedures are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all of the necessary checks to ensure staff's suitability to work with children are carried out prior to confirmation of their employment. The school ensures that all staff are checked by the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level. However, it does not check their medical fitness, it does not always verify their employment history thoroughly and it does not always ensure that one of the references obtained is from the last employer.

School's premises and accommodation

The staff do their best to make effective use of the available space in premises that fall short of a number of regulations. There are insufficient washrooms for the numbers on roll. The school does not have suitable arrangements for pupils who are unwell. It does not provide safe outdoor play as too many pupils use the playground at any one time and its surface is uneven. Classrooms have reached full capacity and some are too small to enable effective teaching. The standard of maintenance and of decoration is unsatisfactory in places. Some flooring is in poor condition and in urgent need of repair. Many of these problems were identified in the last inspection and have not been rectified. The internal environment is enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work and teaching aids.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides accurate information to parents and others, mainly through its prospectus, governors' reports and newsletters. Parents have two annual opportunities to discuss their children's progress formally. In the autumn term, they receive an interim report that outlines their children's targets for improvement in English and mathematics. The end of year reports inform parents of their children's attainments in English, mathematics and science. Teachers' comments outline the next learning steps. Consequently, most parents feel well informed of their children's progress. Not all parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedures have been recently updated and they ensure that complaints can be handled fairly. However, a significant minority of parents are unaware of them.

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:

- provide the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i))
- ensure that classroom resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and that they are they used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

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

- prepare and implement a written policy to prevent bullying which has regard to the DfES guidance '*Bullying: don't suffer in silence*' (paragraph 3(2)(a))
- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with the DfES guidance '*Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education*' (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to the DfES guidance '*Health and safety of pupils on educational visits*' (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- have regard to the DfES guidance '*Health and safety: responsibilities and powers*' and attend to the issues raised during the inspection (paragraph 3(4))
- demonstrate that it has a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, and by any report from the Fire Authority (paragraph 3(5)).

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 appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and ensure that such information

has been taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

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

- having regard to the number, age and needs (including any special needs) of pupils, ensure that all classrooms are appropriate in size to allow effective teaching, and that all areas of the school not compromise health or safety (paragraph 5(j))
- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph (5)(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))
- ensure that there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration (paragraph 5(q))
- ensure that the flooring is in good condition (paragraph 5(s))
- ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

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	Leicester Islamic Academy		
DfES number	856/6007		
Unique reference number	120335		
Type of school	Muslim day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1982		
Age range of pupils	3-11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll	Boys: 157	Girls: 212	Total: 369
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees	£1,300		
Address of school	320 London Road Leicester Leicestershire LE2 2PJ		
Telephone number	01162 705343		
Fax number	01162 448503		
Email address	lia.admin@btconnect.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Nasra Shakir		
Proprietor	Leicester Islamic Academy Trust		
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi		
Dates of inspection	17-18 May 2007		