

Zakaria Muslim Girls' High School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	382/6015
Unique Reference Number	107792
Inspection number	301648
Inspection dates	3-4 July 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).

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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

Zakaria Muslim Girls' High School is an independent Muslim school that provides full-time education for 174 girls aged 11 to 16 years. It was set up in 1982 in response to the demand of the local population. Most students are of Indian and Pakistani heritages and come from the Kirklees area whilst a minority come from Bradford, Halifax and Leeds. It is housed on two sites located within walking distance from each other in a quiet part of Batley. At the time of the inspection, there was one student with a statement of educational need and the vast majority of students were bilingual or had English as an additional language (EAL). The school aims to '*promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, physical and academic development of students in preparation for the responsibilities and opportunities of adult life, in a safe and secure Islamic environment.*' It was last inspected in 2002.

Evaluation of the school

Zakaria Muslim Girls' High School provides a satisfactory quality of education. Students experience a satisfactory curriculum and satisfactory teaching and assessment with elements of good practice. Consequently, they make at least satisfactory progress overall, and achieve very highly in some subjects. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is led by committed staff who have improved the quality of education since the last inspection and show a capacity to improve it further. It meets most of its aims. However, there has been no improvement in the provision of accommodation. Whilst the school complies with most of the regulations related to the quality of education, it falls short of many regulations bearing on students' welfare, health and safety and this aspect of the provision is inadequate.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory as it provides students with experiences in a broad range of areas of learning as well as emphasising their personal development. It is planned satisfactorily and led by specialist teachers in all core subjects and in some foundation subjects. Some plans include useful cross-curricular links that make students' learning a more coherent whole. English language and literature, Islamic studies, geography, history and Urdu are strengths of the curriculum. Students are

examined in eleven subjects at GCSE level. The curriculum is under-resourced, and this has a negative impact on students' learning and progress, most markedly so in practical science and in information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, insufficient time is allocated to ICT. Most Key Stage 3 schemes of work are not very detailed. Whilst these would normally have been too brief to support inexperienced or non specialist teachers, the effective guidance given by senior staff has minimised their potentially adverse effect on the quality of learning. However, the managers have identified the need to provide more detailed plans in the future.

The school uses the information from initial and later assessments to set students according to their ability. However, it does not have procedures in place to assess the needs of students with specific learning difficulties appropriately and meet them fully. More time is allocated to English than to other core subjects in Key Stage 3 to support the majority of students who have EAL. However, the school has not yet devised a strategy to develop literacy in all subjects. The programme of careers education is satisfactory and the school plans to improve it by extending it to Years 7 and 8. The majority of students feel that the school prepares them well for moving on to further education and work and encourages them to plan their future. The curriculum is enriched by a satisfactory range of educational visits. However, students' sports, creative and technological skills are not enhanced by extra-curricular activities. This has been noted by a large majority of students and parents.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory, with good features in teaching. The staff form a cohesive team who are eager for professional development. They share the existing good practice when possible and would welcome more opportunities for doing so. Most have established very good working relationships in their classes, as noted by most students who feel that they receive all the support they need. The good teaching is characterised by excellent subject knowledge, good knowledge of individual students, high expectations, very clear learning objectives and fast pace. These lessons use a wide range of teaching strategies matching students' learning styles. Discussion is encouraged and enthusiasm for the subject communicated. Relevant and challenging homework is set that consolidates and extends students' knowledge and understanding. The satisfactory teaching is typically dominated by the teachers' talk. Also, when students work in groups, the teaching does not support the learning actively as the teacher does not interact with and challenge students. In the less successful lessons, the teaching is not based on sufficient subject knowledge; time is not used well and activities are not well managed.

Teachers are not sufficiently informed of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of students and do not take these into account when planning lessons. They design lessons specifically for the upper or lower sets but the tasks do not always match students' needs sufficiently closely within each set. The school uses a wide range of assessments to test students' learning. However, it does not use this information to monitor students' progress rigorously and to plan how to improve teaching and learning so as to raise standards further. The quality of marking is variable. Although

students receive useful verbal feedback, the teachers' written comments rarely show them how to improve.

As a result of the satisfactory curriculum, teaching and assessment, students make at least satisfactory progress overall. They achieve very highly in their GCSE examinations in English language and literature, Islamic studies, geography, history and Urdu. They make good progress in mathematics in relation to their starting points. They do not achieve as well as expected in science, ICT and art.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Provision for students' moral, social and cultural development is good and provision for their spiritual development is a particular strength. Students enjoy their education and value the opportunities to reinforce their Islamic identity. Their confidence and speaking skills are fostered effectively through regular presentations and class discussions. They contribute to assemblies by reading texts that promote reflection and leading the recitation of *du'as* (supplications) or Qur'anic verses. In discussion, they show great maturity, thoughtfulness and interest. Their spiritual awareness translates into good, often outstanding, behaviour, consideration and respect for others and an excellent attitude to learning. It fires their moral and personal development, well fostered by an effective programme of personal, social and health education that reflects the Islamic ethos of the school.

Students show empathy with the national and global communities and make generous donations, for example towards olive trees in Palestine and water wells in Africa. They contribute to their school community by fulfilling a number of responsibilities. They experience citizenship through a planned programme and a full election process when forming their school council. However, council activities are still under-developed. Students demonstrate good enterprising skills and enthusiasm when helping run an annual 'fun day' to raise funds for their school. They are well prepared for life in a multicultural society as they learn about world religions and cultures from Year 7. They benefit from the educational visits and activities that enrich their social and cultural development. For example, Year 9 students have had their poems published in a national competition. Students acquire basic literacy, numeracy, communication and organisational skills that prepare them for their future economic well-being.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The school's provision for students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. There are satisfactory procedures in place to promote good behaviour and discourage bullying. However, some students feel that the school does not always deal effectively with bullying. The managers are aware of the need to strengthen the pastoral system. Staff carry out thorough risk assessments prior to educational visits. Registers are maintained adequately. The newly nominated person for child protection has not had time to receive training and to prepare and implement written

policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of students in compliance with the latest guidance. The implementation of the first aid policy is not monitored closely. Consequently, not all accidents are recorded and staff do not renew their first aid qualifications on time. The school does not comply with fire safety regulations. It does not carry out regular checks to ensure a satisfactory level of health and safety.

Although the school teaches about healthy living, it does not promote this sufficiently in practice. It has stopped providing meals that were neither nutritious nor well balanced but has yet to find a suitable alternative. Furthermore, students have insufficient opportunities for physical exercise. These shortcomings were noted by many students and parents. The school does not fulfil its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Although the proprietors ensure that all teaching staff are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for their suitability to work with children, they have not followed the same procedure for non teaching staff. When reviewing their recruitment procedure recently, they have identified that not all the checks required prior to the confirmation of employment of all staff were carried out. They are addressing both issues.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are maintained inadequately and fall short of several regulations, as discussed during the inspection and outlined at the end of this report. These deficiencies were noted during the last inspection.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides accurate information to parents and others. Parents are invited to meet the teachers formally once a year and receive an annual report on their daughters' progress. The best comments from teachers state what the pupil can do, cannot do and where they need to improve. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires are supportive of the school.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedure has recently been updated to ensure that complaints are handled promptly and fairly.

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 the curriculum provides the opportunity for all students to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i))
- ensure that teachers have a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- provide classroom resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range and ensure that they are used effectively, particularly in science and in ICT (paragraph 1(3)(f))
- put a framework in place to assess students' work regularly and thoroughly and use the information from such assessment to plan teaching so that students can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

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

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are students at the school in compliance with Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (DfES 0803/2001) (paragraph 3(4))
- demonstrate that it has a satisfactory level of fire safety by implementing all the fire safety procedures (paragraph 3(5))
- implement its policy on first aid rigorously (paragraph 3(6)).

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 all staff at the school and any member of the body of persons named as the proprietor have been subject to a check with the CRB to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b))
- 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, professional references and 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 ensure that:

- the drainage system is adequate for hygienic purposes and for the disposal of waste water and surface water (paragraph 5(b))
- the school buildings provide reasonable resistance to penetration by rain, snow, wind and moisture from the ground (paragraph 5(f))
- there is sufficient access so that emergency evacuations can be accomplished safely for all students, including those with special needs (paragraph 5(g))
- it can give reasonable assurances that the premises have not been condemned by the Environmental Health Authority (paragraph 5(i))
- all areas of the school do not compromise health or safety (paragraph 5(j))
- there are appropriate facilities for students who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))
- classrooms and other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state improve (paragraph 5(n))
- sound insulation and acoustics allow effective teaching and communication (paragraph 5(o))
- the lighting, heating and ventilation in the classrooms and other parts of the school are satisfactory and in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(p))
- there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration (paragraph 5(q))
- there is appropriate flooring and that this is in good condition (paragraph 5(s)).

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	Zakaria Muslim Girls' High School		
DfES number	382/6015		
Unique reference number	107792		
Type of school	Day Muslim school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1982		
Age range of students	11-16		
Gender of students	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Girls: 174	Total: 174	
Number of students with a statement of special educational need	Girls: 0	Total: 0	
Number of students who are looked after	Girls: 0	Total: 0	
Annual fees	£800		
Address of school	111 Warwick Road Batley West Yorkshire WF17 6AJ		
Telephone number	01924 444217		
Fax number	01924 448660		
Email address	zakariaschool@yahoo.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Yusuf Jasat		
Proprietor	Muslim Education Trust		
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi		
Dates of inspection	3-4 July 2007		