

# Madrasatul Imam Muhammad Zakariya

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	350/6018
Unique Reference Number	133285
Inspection number	316842
Inspection dates	11 - 12 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI

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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Madrasatul Imam Muhammed Zakariya School is a Muslim secondary school for girls aged 11-19. It is in the centre of Bolton. It was founded in September 2000 and provides both an Islamic and an academic education. There are 110 students on roll. Some girls who complete the secular curriculum at 16 remain at the school in order to complete their degree in Islamic Theology. The school aims to *'ensure that all students should feel their years in school have been well spent and that they have attained, primarily, the highest levels of spiritual, moral and Islamic awareness and, in close conjunction to this, the highest levels of physical and intellectual achievement of which they are capable. In order to achieve this school seeks to provide a suitable environment for religious and secular development and for sound personal relationships.*

## Evaluation of the school

Madrasatul Imam Muhammad Zakariya School meets its aims very successfully. The school provides an outstanding education for its students and ensures that they have very good attitudes and a very good work ethic. At the end of Year 11 students reach very high standards in GCSE examinations. The provision made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding as is that made for their welfare health and safety. Students particularly value the very good personal relationships which are evident in school and the very good support they receive. The school meets all of the regulations except one; there is no outside play area.

## Quality of education

The school provides an outstanding education and curriculum for its students. There are two discrete areas of the curriculum. In the morning students follow a challenging course in Islamic Theology. This is made up of a one year foundation course which includes a study of the Urdu language and a five year degree course covering Arabic language and literature, morphology, Arabic grammar, logic, Islamic philosophy, Islamic history, Islamic jurisprudence, translation and commentary of the Holy Qur'an and a comprehensive study of the Prophetic Traditions. Older students who have completed their secular education attend the school during morning sessions in order to complete the degree course. In the afternoons students follow a

curriculum which is based on the core subjects of the National Curriculum and design technology (DT), physical education (PE) and textiles. British history and geography are taught through the citizenship programme and in general studies lessons.

There are effective policies and schemes of work for all subjects. There are specialist teaching rooms for science, textiles and information and communication technology (ICT) and there is a library. A nearby community centre is used for PE and students have opportunities to develop a range of skills and take regular exercise.

The teaching of National Curriculum subjects is enhanced by the introduction of Islamic concepts and principles. Teachers make good links between subjects in order to make learning more effective. For example, learning about the benefits and negative aspects of the media in an Arabic lesson gave students very good opportunities to consolidate knowledge about parts of speech, to hone their comprehension and translation skills and improve written and oral skills in their third language. A minority of parents noted that there were no enrichment activities in their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. The headteacher and two deputy headteachers maintain an overview of the secular and non secular curriculum and of teaching and learning. They provide very good guidance and direction for staff. For example, teachers are provided with a list of possible responses and comments which can be used when marking work or to ensure that effective oral feedback is given to students. Senior staff observe lessons and tell teachers what has gone well and what could be improved. National guidance, good practice from other schools and a range of good quality, age appropriate text books are used effectively by all staff this ensures that students make outstanding progress as they move through the school.

Students work in a variety of groupings during every lesson. They regularly and routinely discuss challenging and difficult concepts and are encouraged to formulate opinions and debate these with their teachers and others in the class. As a result all students are very articulate and explain their ideas confidently. This is a very important skill which helps them attain well in all subjects.

Lessons get off to a prompt start and the pace of teaching is brisk. The objectives of lessons are shared with students and are revisited at the end of the lesson to ensure that the work has been understood. Assessment is outstanding. All teachers use questioning very well, there are regular tests and students are assessed during each lesson. Targeted support helps all students achieve well and attitudes and behaviour are 'tracked' by staff so that potential problems can be identified at an early stage. Marking is exemplary and students are told what they have achieved and what they must do to improve.

Students take Key Stage 3 SATs tests, which are marked internally. Results indicate that all students, whatever their starting points make better than expected progress and attain very good results. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has improved steadily since 2003. A very high proportion of students attain at least five A\*-C grades in English literature and language, mathematics, science, textiles, Urdu and Arabic and all students pass all subjects with A\*-G grades. Some students study for additional GCSE examinations at home. The school provides support for these students. The results of national tests together with evidence seen in lessons and in students' books and files indicates that students make outstanding progress in all subjects and reach very high standards.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

This aspect of the schools work is outstanding. There are regular assemblies, prayer sessions and other activities which help to support spiritual and moral development. The *Hadith* and other religious stories focus on how the Prophet advocated equality and tolerance. Students try to be good people and recognise that in order to develop spiritually they must recognize what they have done wrong even if such actions are unintentional. They understand that by making reparation they can undo some of the harm they may have done. Older students discuss very complex concepts, such as why Muslims may fear death, with great understanding and composure. They say that they often compare common strands in the beliefs of Christians, Jews, Hindus and others; however, they also feel that Islam and other religions are not explained particularly well in some other schools. A student suggested that there could be a national day in which all school children met and worked with those of other faiths in order to break down barriers and achieve a better understanding of other cultures.

Students say that they value the Islamic environment and that a single sex education means they feel more at ease because they can confide in other females and relate more effectively in the knowledge that other females understand them completely. This is not, however, a closed or oppressive society of females. There are many opportunities in the secular and non-secular curriculum for students to develop their self knowledge, moral, spiritual and religious beliefs and understanding of the wider world. For example, during *Anjuman* (assembly or gathering) one girl gave a flawless presentation about the dangers of drugs and intoxication. This combined very clear Islamic religious and moral teaching with a very good understanding of scientific processes and knowledge of the temptations and dangers in the wider world. The student spoke authoratively and passionately about how easy it might be to 'succumb, in a moment of foolishness, to a variety of dangerous and forbidden intoxications.' Other students listened intently to the description of the emotional, physical, moral and spiritual damage that misuse of substances can cause. The moral message of this was driven home during the thoughtful prayers, led by the student, asking Allah for protection against harm.

Students participate well in lessons, in assemblies and around the school. Their behaviour and attendance are outstanding. Positive rewards are used by all staff and there are merits, and the headteacher's award. Most students are thoughtful and reflective. They monitor their own actions and help and support others.

## Welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision made for the welfare, health and safety of students is outstanding. The school has implemented all the latest guidance on safeguarding and spiritual and moral teaching provides students with effective guidance on how to stay safe and healthy. All the appropriate policies are in place. The school monitors the contents of packed lunches and ensures that all students eat healthily at lunchtime. Any concerns are recorded and shared with parents. Records show that since implementing this system the number of concerns has reduced dramatically. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has carried out the necessary safeguarding checks for all staff.

## School's premises and accommodation

The accommodation is good. The school is located in a former Methodist chapel and the building offers spacious accommodation which is clean and well maintained. There are a number of specialist teaching rooms and a good sized hall which is used for assembly and at break and lunchtimes. There is no outside play area. In order to compensate for this teachers take care to keep the building well ventilated and use a nearby community centre for PE. The recently completed science laboratory is 'state of the art' and the new ICT suite has appropriate lighting and an air conditioning unit.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents are provided with a good range of information. The prospectus includes all the necessary information and parents can view additional information on request. The headteacher and staff make themselves available to discuss any concerns that parents might have and there are formal parent and teacher meetings.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clear, fair and well written complaints procedure. There have been no complaints in the last year.

## 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 premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- make appropriate arrangements to provide outside space for students to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

## 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:

- extend the range of enrichment activities.

## School details

Name of school	Madrasatul Imam Muhammad Zakariya
DCSF number	350/6018
Unique reference number	133285
Type of school	Secondary Muslim
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 2000
Age range of students	11-19
Gender of students	Girls
Number on roll (full-time students)	Girls: 101
Number on roll (part-time students)	Girls: 9
Annual fees (day students)	£700.00
Address of school	Keswick Street Bolton Lancashire BL1 8LX
Telephone number	01204384434
Fax number	01204384434
Email address	mimz.keswick@btinternet.com
Headteacher	Mrs Amena Sader
Proprietor	Mr Mahmood Chandia
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI
Dates of inspection	11 - 12 December 2007