

# Abu Bakr Independent School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	3356010
Unique Reference Number	132750
Inspection number	316892
Inspection dates	5 - 6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Israr Khan 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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Abu Bakr Independent School was established in 2000 and its numbers on roll have steadily increased since then. A boys' school was opened in 2006. The girls' school is popular and oversubscribed. The school aims to provide its students with an education that empowers them within a friendly faith environment. The main purpose of the school is to 'lay the foundation for the building of an Islamic personality, providing its students with the highest standard of education'. Although the school has an Islamic ethos, it is open to children of all faiths and aims to integrate its pupils successfully into British society.

## Evaluation of the school

Abu Bakr is a good school that fulfils its aims effectively. It is a calm, orderly community with a caring atmosphere. The quality of education is good. Teaching is good overall with some outstanding lessons seen. Pupils achieve well and the standard of their work is good. Teachers are good role models who promote pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. The school meets the majority of the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

With the exception of music, the school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum. The girls' school operates a normal school day. The boys' school provides additional, Quranic and Islamic Studies lessons. The school manages to achieve this through a long school day for boys where the Islamic curriculum is taught in the morning and the secular curriculum is taught from mid-afternoon to early evening.

The good curriculum is broad and balanced. There are detailed schemes of work in place for secular subjects. Schemes of work for the Islamic curriculum are in need of further development. The personal, social and health education and citizenship programmes enhance the curriculum. The daily congregational prayers are an integral part of curricular provision and make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

The school makes satisfactory provision for careers guidance and all pupils have the opportunity to undertake work experience. The curriculum is supported by adequate resources and is enriched further by a number of educational visits to places of

interest. The school has an information and communication technology (ICT) suite at both sites and practical science lessons are taught at a local state school.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Working relationships are trusting and supportive and this helps lay a very effective foundation for good learning. In the best lessons pupils understand the purpose of each lesson because teachers explain clearly and write the learning objectives on the board, along with the relevant key vocabulary. Lessons get off to a brisk start and teachers make full use of the time available. Teaching is lively and direct and pupils respond very well, concentrating for considerable periods of time.

The style of lessons is traditional and well structured. The good use of questioning to encourage active participation and probe pupils' understanding is a strong feature of the teaching. This also helps pupils to become more confident in their speaking and listening. However, there are no computers within classrooms and the lack of other interactive equipment limits the range of teaching styles that can be employed.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated and work hard. They do not fuss, listen very carefully during lessons and give teachers their full, undivided attention. Attitudes are exemplary. During lessons observed, teachers had to correct the class only when pupils spontaneously called out, rather than putting their hands up. However, this was only because pupils' enthusiasm temporarily got the better of them and they forgot to abide by the classroom code of conduct.

Pupils make good progress in Islamic studies. In Quranic memorisation classes, which are of a very long duration, pupils make satisfactory progress. They do not always engage sufficiently with what they are memorising in these lessons. Assessment and tracking procedures for this area of provision are not rigorously monitored. In secular subjects there are good systems for assessing pupils' progress and attainment. They are used effectively to inform teachers' planning and to match work to pupils' needs. There is good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In Years 7 and 8, pupils sit QCA test papers in English and mathematics and internally set papers in all other subjects. Teachers set regular tests and keep detailed records of pupils' attainment, matched to National Curriculum levels. Year 9 pupils undertake national tests and GCSE assessment frameworks are used in Key Stage 4. While there was a dip in results in 2007, there has been an upward trend in exam results over the last four years.

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

The provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' strong work ethic and excellent behaviour is instilled effectively through Islamic studies and citizenship lessons. They enjoy their time in school and attendance is good. Pupils are proud of their Islamic identity which helps nurture their self-confidence and self-esteem. They are taught the difference between right

and wrong through the teachings of the principles of Islam. The participation of pupils in daily prayers contributes significantly to their spiritual development. Pupils contribute well to the community and are well prepared for the next stage of education. Citizenship lessons and visits from the emergency services contribute well to pupils' knowledge of public institutions and services. Whilst tolerance and harmony between different cultures are promoted not all pupils are provided with the opportunity to fully appreciate different cultures and traditions because current arrangements are inconsistent.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school cares well for its pupils and encourages them to adopt healthy life styles. The school has all the required policies in place and the day to day health and safety of pupils, is good. The school undertakes a broad range of risk assessments in relation to premises and activities and acts quickly on any findings. There are regular fire drills and these are well documented. Fire safety training is appropriately recorded. The school has named officers for child protection and these have undertaken appropriate and up to date training. Training for other staff is carried out internally. The school has made a satisfactory response to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school's staff recruitment procedures are rigorous and consistently implemented and therefore conform to all regulations.

## School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory overall. Most of the classrooms at the girls' school comprise modular buildings. These are adequate in size and condition. English, mathematics and science lessons take place in spacious, purpose built classrooms. ICT lessons take place in a well-equipped suite. While there is no science laboratory on site, appropriate arrangements are in place for girls to use facilities at a nearby secondary school.

The surface of the playground area at the girls' school is in poor condition. It is uneven and, during periods of rain, large pools of water accumulate. In addition, there is inadequate drainage from a small kitchen area and waste water can seep into the approach road that leads onto the site. There are too few toilets at the girls' school for the number of girls on roll.

The boys' school is purpose-built and the standard of accommodation is good. Much of the building has recently been refurbished and classrooms are light, bright and spacious. Boys also undertake practical science lessons at a mainstream secondary school. Both sites have appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides good information for parents, conforming to all regulations. Regular letters keep parents well informed about school affairs. School reports are satisfactory and provide parents with information about the progress that their children make. However, there is some inconsistency in how targets for improvement are included in these reports. Parents' views of the school raised questions regarding visits, activities and preparation for later life. Inspection evidence indicates that this provision is at least satisfactory. Good records are kept that can provide any outside body with detailed information on request.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints policy meets all of the required regulations. The school reports that they have received no complaints within the past 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:

- ensure that the drainage system disposes of waste water adequately (paragraph 5(b)).
- ensure that there are sufficient washrooms for pupils (paragraph 5(k)).
- ensure that appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely are made (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:

- enliven the long Hifz classes through the introduction of some Quranic Arabic vocabulary within these lessons so that pupils can engage more with what they are memorising
- develop further the schemes of work for Islamic studies
- improve the assessment and tracking of progress for pupils memorising the Quran
- improve the quality of annual school reports by including clear targets for improvement

## School details

Name of school	Abu Bakr Independent School		
DCSF number	3356010		
Unique reference number	132750		
Type of school	Muslim secondary school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2000		
Age range of pupils	11 - 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 102	Girls: 257	Total: 359
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 30	Girls: 0	Total: 30
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 (day pupils)	£ 790 - 1200		
Annual fees (boarders)	£ 2000		
Address of school	154-160 Wednesbury Road Palfrey Walsall West Midlands WS1 4JJ		
Telephone number	Girls: 01922 626829 Boys: 01922 724149		
Fax number	01922 646175		
Email address	info@abubakrgirlschool.org		
Headteacher	Mr Mohammed Ramzan (MA)		
Proprietor	Mr Mohammad Luqman (MA)		
Reporting inspector	Israr Khan AI		
Dates of inspection	5-6 December 2007		