

Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	309/6087
Unique Reference Number	134084
Inspection number	316939
Inspection dates	31 October-1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	R Kapadia 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

The Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation School is an educational establishment in Tottenham, in north London, which aims to provide high quality academic education '*whilst developing each child's Islamic personality (shakhsiyah)*' in partnership with their parents. It was established in 2002 after several groups of mothers taught their children at home. After unexpected problems with its accommodation in a neighbouring borough, the school had to move twice in a year and has been in its current premises in a mosque for less than a year. This has meant that almost all the teachers are new to the school in the autumn term 2007, when Tifly nursery also opened. There are 85 pupils on roll, aged between 3 and 12. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need, but a few speak English as an additional language. This is the first inspection report on the school after it was fully registered in June 2005.

Evaluation of the school

The Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation School achieves its aim with regards to developing children's *shakhsiyah*, by the use of *halaqah* (circle time) and teaching Islamic studies in a cross-curricular way. Its curriculum is satisfactory, as is pupils' progress, but the teaching and assessment are inadequate. The overall quality of education and care is satisfactory, whilst pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school meets most regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is reasonably broad and satisfactory overall, though there are weaknesses in the curriculum for the Nursery and for the few Year 7 pupils in the school.

Classes are small and the aim is to offer '*human-scale education*'. The core subjects are based on the National Curriculum, which is used as the basis for long-term, medium-term and short-term planning. The overall teaching time of 22.5 hours is slightly short, so that the time for mathematics, science, and some foundation subjects is slightly low. The *halaqah* curriculum, which is mainly taught orally, covers Islamic studies and history, as well as personal, social and health education and

citizenship. However, coverage of history is limited, as noted by a pupil who said, *'We should do the history of the past in Britain'*. The school is making efforts to integrate Islamic studies with the subjects from the National Curriculum. Arabic is taught as the language of Islam. There are also lessons in information and communication technology, art and craft, and physical education (PE). In *tajweed* (recitation) and *nasheed* (Islamic songs) pupils are provided with the opportunity to express their aesthetic talents. There are only a few Year 7 pupils, but they do not have access to practical facilities for subjects such as science and technology. The school is planning not to have Key Stage 3 pupils next year.

The school's planning indicates that all six areas of learning are covered within the topic-based approach for the Nursery and Reception classes. However, planning in the Nursery is not implemented, but is slightly better in the Reception class. One outdoor area adjacent to a classroom is not used for extending the curriculum because of health and safety hazards, nor is the external playground area used sufficiently for outdoor and practical learning. Young children do not receive sufficient opportunities to initiate activities for independent learning as most lessons are led by the teacher. The resources available, though adequate, are not used to extend learning.

Teaching and assessment are inadequate overall, though there are satisfactory elements. There were some good lessons seen as well as some inadequate lessons. In the good lessons, which were usually given by qualified teachers, a brisk pace ensured good learning, with links to the school's ethos, such as a lesson on arithmetical methods using real data from mosques. A good lesson in *tajweed*, well prepared by the teacher, led to enjoyment by children of recitation. Inadequate lessons occurred when teachers lacked secure subject knowledge to teach ideas in science or PE. Lessons did not adhere closely to lesson plans. Work was not well matched to pupils' needs, as activities undertaken were sometimes unsuitable, and time was not always used wisely. Teaching is often over directed and pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop independent learning habits. The management is aware that recent upheavals have had an adverse effect and have planned a good range of training and development opportunities. Resources are adequate and the school has recently acquired a set of 10 laptops; however, computers are rarely used by teachers in lessons.

Pupils' work is marked and sometimes commented on by teachers, but they do not regularly take pupils' prior learning into account. There is regular testing in the core subjects, but the results are not collated or used systematically in subsequent teaching to plan subsequent learning or correct pupils' misconceptions.

The school does not have precise information on pupils' prior attainment. No external tests are taken. Overall progress with regards to the school's aims, which particularly relate to Islamic studies, is satisfactory, as pupils are well motivated and work hard.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It reflects the school's ethos to develop *shakhsiyah*, a key component of their social development. Pupils' growing understanding of the Muslim faith helps to develop strong moral values. Regular assemblies and prayer sessions are held to provide pupils with additional spiritual and moral development.

Pupils are very well behaved; they help and respect each other. They are polite and greet each other. Pupils value the good relationships formed with teachers, for whom they have great respect. Pupils enjoy their learning, and express their affiliation to their school and religion. No attendance figures for last year were available, but attendance was high during the inspection, except in the Nursery class, indicating that pupils like coming to the school. The school has organised termly trips in the past, but none so far this term, due to Ramadan. Pupils are given information about British public institutions and some elements of other cultures, though this is rather limited in terms of the taught curriculum; visitors such as police and fire-fighters visit the school. There are some multi-cultural posters and pupils' work is displayed, though more could be done to promote cultural tolerance and harmony. There is a school council, with a changing membership, encouraging pupils to make a positive contribution to their own community. Pupils' economic understanding and their longer-term well-being is promoted through literacy and numeracy.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

There is satisfactory provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Staff have had training in child protection procedures. Classes are small and pupils are closely supervised. Pupils are taught to make healthy food choices and PE is partly taught through martial arts. During the inspection, an unsafe gymnasium was used for a lesson, but was immediately taken out of use when the problems were raised. There is a clear policy on safety when making trips.

Pupils say that there is no bullying and that they are happy in the school. Pupils are confident that they can tell staff about any concerns they have and that staff will address them. Teachers are caring and praise pupils' efforts. Fire safety checks have been completed and the fire precaution arrangements are now satisfactory. A lift provides access to the school for pupils with disabilities. A satisfactory accessibility plan is in place as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school does not comply fully with the regulations in this area, particularly with regards to the completion of checks on references before staff appointments are

confirmed. The details of the checks undertaken are not included in a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are satisfactory and appropriate to meet the needs of the school and pupils' learning. Located in a listed building which is part of a mosque, the building is adequately maintained and is kept tidy and clean. There is a Nursery classroom on the ground floor and eight adequately sized classrooms on the first floor; one classroom is large and is used for assemblies. The playground area within the compound is surrounded by a wooden fence. At present, the school has no specialist rooms for practical subjects such as science and technology, and does not have a appropriate facilities for pupils when they are sick.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has a prospectus and other supporting documentation, which contain all the required information. There is a system of regular reporting to parents through regular written reports. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress with the teachers at the open days each term. Newsletters keep parents informed about events and activities. A high proportion of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires; all except one were positive and most were very supportive of the school, though only one parent provided written comment. The school works hard to form good relations with its parents and a few teachers have their own children educated in the school.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints policy which fully meets the requirements; the single written complaint last year was handled effectively.

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 its curriculum policy is implemented effectively (paragraph 1(2))
- provide a programme of activities appropriate to the needs of pupils who are below compulsory school age (paragraph 1(2)(h)(ii))

- ensure that lessons are well planned, effective teaching methods and suitable activities are used, and class time is managed wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c))
- ensure that teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and take these into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d)).

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 been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references, and take such information into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- establish a single central register to show checks made on staff prior to confirmation of their appointment (paragraph 4C(2 and 3)).

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

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l)).

School details

Name of school	Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation School		
DCSF number	309/6087		
Unique reference number	134084		
Type of school	Muslim		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2002		
Age range of pupils	3– 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 41	Girls: 36	Total: 77
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 4	Total: 8
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2, 520		
Address of school	1 st Floor 277 St Ann's Road Tottenham London N15 5RG		
Telephone number	0208 802 8651		
Email address	headteacher@isfnet.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs F Reddy		
Proprietor	Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation		
Reporting inspector	R Kapadia HMI		
Dates of inspection	31 October– 1 November 2007		