

Quwwat-ul-Islam Girls' School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	316/6066
Unique Reference Number	134627
Inspection number	316949
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2007
Reporting inspector	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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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



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

Quwwat-ul-Islam Girls' School is an independent Muslim school for girls aged 4 to 14 years, situated in the Forest Gate area of the London Borough of Newham. It opened all the primary classes in August 2003 and expanded into a secondary school in September 2005 by opening one class each year. Most pupils are bilingual or have English as an additional language. Admission is by an entrance examination and the school is strongly committed to having a maximum of 25 pupils per class. It serves the local community, so that most pupils are of Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani and Somali heritages. The school's mission is to '*empower the children with the highest academic standards and environment to enable them to make a positive difference in society.*' To this end, it teaches an Islamic curriculum as well as National Curriculum subjects, aiming to '*promote sound Islamic values where children learn respect for others, form positive self images and care for their environment, so that they may actively become responsible in the community.*' This is the school's first published inspection report.

Evaluation of the school

Quwwat-ul-Islam Girls' School provides a good quality of education and meets its stated aims. Its curriculum is good and makes outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory and much of the teaching is good. As a result of the curriculum and teaching they experience, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress. The school provides well for pupils' welfare, health and safety. It is led by a cohesive team of dedicated senior managers and teachers who are eager to make further improvements. The school complies with all but one of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good, being broad and balanced, well resourced and meeting the needs of all pupils. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum except for music and provides an Islamic curriculum that achieves a good balance between moral and spiritual education. There are many strengths as the school makes good provision for basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science, information and communication technology (ICT), as well as for Arabic and Islamic studies, art in the primary school and citizenship in Key Stage 3. Reading and writing are taught well.

The school has good ICT facilities, used effectively in all subjects. There is a strong emphasis on practical work to enhance theoretical learning. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 do not always record this sufficiently well. The range of extra-curricular activities is not very wide but enriched recently by the introduction of a *hifz* (memorisation of the Qur'an) programme in response to parental wishes. The planning and monitoring of the curriculum is satisfactorily. The planning is sufficiently detailed to support the teaching, even where specialists do not teach the subjects. It is suitably modified to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. While the school has started to plan links between subjects to make learning more meaningful, it has yet to devise a rigorous strategy to develop literacy across all subjects. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship programmes reflect the Islamic ethos of the school.

While the quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall, much of the teaching seen was good. Where teaching had a brisk pace and teachers used a range of methods and tasks to match pupils' learning styles, pupils made good progress. In a few lessons, pupils made outstanding progress where there were very high expectations and teaching stretched them consistently. In almost all lessons, teachers used effective questioning to assess pupils' understanding and make them think. However, in the satisfactory teaching, the planning did not match pupils' different rates of learning sufficiently well and, as a result; this did not always stretch them. In a small minority of lessons, poor time management and unclear learning objectives result in insufficient learning and progress. Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to support pupils' learning. The school has a wide range of tests to assess pupils' learning and monitors the progress made by individuals adequately. However, the marking does not often show pupils what they need to do to improve and learning targets set for each individual are not always used as tools to ensure they progress at the highest rate possible.

Because of the good curriculum and satisfactory teaching, pupils make at least satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve very highly in English, mathematics and science.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding, with more exemplary features in the primary school. Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning as shown by their willingness to participate in lessons, their eagerness to achieve well and their good attendance. They form very positive relationships with their peers and with their teachers whom they regard, rightly, as excellent role models. Through the structured reward system and their teachers' nurturing, they develop a good sense of self-esteem and self-confidence, resulting in outstanding behaviour and very good personal development. However, the school has correctly identified that the pastoral system needs strengthening in the secondary school to help the small minority of pupils who have not yet developed a high level of self-discipline and self-esteem. Furthermore, there is a perception among a few pupils

that staff do not always treat all pupils fairly, an issue that is already being addressed by the school. The school is successful in developing the spiritual aspect of the pupils' personal development through the Islamic curriculum, other subjects and thematic assemblies. For example, Year 3 pupils were observed reciting the Qur'an with a great depth of sincerity and passion and a Year 5 pupil explained that she loved art *'because it's the most fun subject and it makes us feel good inside'*.

The school meets its aim of promoting *'sound Islamic attitudes where children learn respect for others, form positive self images and care for their environment, so that they may actively become responsible within the community.'* Islamic studies and citizenship emphasise personal responsibility, teach pupils about British institutions and prepare them well to become active and responsible citizens. Year 9 pupils, for instance, were seen discussing various aspects of the youth justice system. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the life of their community. Class representatives meet termly with the headteacher to discuss further improvements. For example, they have suggested competitions between key stages, such as making three-dimensional models of *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). In each class, pupils have the opportunity to fulfil responsibilities. However, the older pupils are aspiring for higher profile roles and a greater voice. Through Islamic studies, citizenship, PSHE, history and art, pupils develop a healthy awareness of diversity. However, whilst pupils of primary school age enjoy a good range of educational visits that enhance their cultural development, this area is under-developed in Key Stage 3, as noted by some parents and pupils.

The curriculum helps pupils develop good basic skills as well as organisational, team work and communication skills which will contribute to their future economic well-being. The school is developing its provision for careers guidance to meet the needs of its pupils as they move up the school.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

This aspect of the provision is good, as evidenced by the good level of day-to-day care provided by staff. All the policies and procedures aiming at minimising the risks throughout the school day are implemented very effectively. Consequently, the risk of accidents is reduced; pupils feel safe and enjoy learning in a calm, orderly environment. The vast majority of pupils respond well to the excellent strategies used by the staff, so their behaviour is outstanding and instances of bullying are rare. Although the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are reviewed regularly, the nominated person for child protection needs to refresh her training, update the relevant policy and procedures and ensure that all staff update their training. The school is already addressing this issue. Although attendance and punctuality are monitored effectively, a small number of parents fail to respond to the school's efforts and do not ensure that their children always start school on time or attend regularly.

Pupils are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and contributing to current improvements to offer a healthier range of foods in the tuck shop. Some of the older pupils would welcome more opportunities for physical exercise. The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The trustees have recently updated the school's recruitment procedures and ensure that all the required checks are made on staff prior to confirmation of their employment. The school has compiled a central register that enables it to monitor this process easily.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises provide a bright and pleasant learning environment. The specialist accommodation includes a spacious science laboratory, a well equipped ICT suite and two halls. There are sensible plans to expand further whilst being mindful of not overcrowding the school, especially as some classrooms have already reached full capacity. Staggered playtimes enable safe use of the playground, which has been developed to provide interesting activities. However, there are no climbing frames or other large-size equipment to enhance the youngest pupils' physical development.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information to parents and others. It has established a good partnership with parents and consults with them regularly to improve its provision. It has recently increased the frequency of reporting in response to parental demand. In addition to two interim reports and two opportunities to meet teachers to discuss their daughters' progress, parents receive a detailed annual report that is of a good quality as teachers' comments show what each child can do and what her next steps of learning are.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has suitable procedures for handling complaints fairly and promptly. However, not all parents understand 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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

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:

- help pupils gain a better understanding of their next steps of learning, and therefore progress at a faster rate, by ensuring that marking shows them consistently how to improve and learning targets are used as effective tools for improvement
- share the best teaching practice that exists in the school to improve further the quality of teaching
- devise and implement a rigorous strategy to develop literacy skills across all subjects
- provide the older pupils with more frequent opportunities for educational visits and give them a greater voice.

School details

Name of school	Quwwat-ul-Islam Girls' School
DCSF number	316/6066
Unique reference number	134627
Type of school	Muslim day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	August 2003
Age range of pupils	4-14 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	233
Annual fees	£1,650 for the primary and £1,900 for the secondary
Address of school	16 Chaucer Road Forest Gate London E7 9NB
Telephone number	0208 548 4736
Fax number	0208 472 4411
Email address	bkhan@quwwatulislam.com
Headteacher	Mrs Bushra Khan
Proprietor	Quwwat Islam society
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Dates of inspection	22-23 November 2007