

# Suffah Primary School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	313/6072
Unique Reference Number	134243
Inspection number	316958
Inspection dates	28-29 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](http://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

Suffah Primary School is an independent Muslim school for children aged 4 to 11 years. It opened in 2001 and it is situated within a mosque complex in the London Borough of Hounslow. It serves the local community of mainly Bangladeshi, Moroccan, Pakistani and Somali heritages. At the time of the inspection, there was one pupil with a statement of educational need and the majority of pupils were either bilingual or at advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. The school seeks to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as Arabic, Islamic and Qur'anic studies. It aims to *'provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve within a conducive Islamic environment; to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life as appropriate to the Qur'an and Hadith.'* This is the school's first published inspection report.

## Evaluation of the school

Suffah Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets most of its aims. Its short history has been marked by a high turnover of staff that has slowed down the establishment of good systems and practices. However, through the efforts of the team of managers and teachers, pupils make satisfactory progress, experiencing a satisfactory curriculum and satisfactory teaching and assessment. There is an emphasis on their personal development and provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects is good. Their welfare, health and safety are promoted satisfactorily. The school complies with most of the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced, with a clear emphasis on literacy and numeracy to give pupils a secure foundation to access the rest of the curriculum. The planning is sound and takes into account pupils' needs and ages, enabling them to make satisfactory progress. Pupils who have moderate learning difficulties have individual educational plans that help meet their needs and monitor their progress. In the Reception class, the curriculum follows the Foundation Stage guidance. Throughout the school, the curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well and the programme of personal, social and health education

(PSHE) reflects the ethos of the school. Although cross-curricular links are planned to make pupils' learning more meaningful, there are missed opportunities to develop literacy in all subjects. Nevertheless, provision for basic skills is satisfactory and the teaching of reading skills is a strength. In Year 6, drama makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' speaking, thinking and creative skills, and boosts their confidence. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively across the curriculum. Provision for physical education (PE) is satisfactory and in Key Stage 2, pupils have weekly swimming in addition to a PE lesson. The school has clearly identified the correct priorities to improve the curriculum further. It has recently taken appropriate action to improve the curriculum for Islamic subjects as a result of a consultation with parents. It rightly seeks to develop the creative curriculum and to give pupils more opportunities for independent work and for thinking at a higher level to help them reach their full potential. It is also aware of the need to continue to build up its resources that are generally adequate and used effectively.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. The school provides basic training for newly qualified teachers and staff are eager for continuous professional development. There is a wide range of tests to assess pupils' learning and there are satisfactory systems in place to record these assessments. In the Reception class, assessment follows the Foundation Stage guidance closely. However, in other years marking is not always encouraging or helpful and pupils do not always receive constructive verbal feedback. Consequently, they do not always understand why their work has been marked as incorrect and consequently they cannot learn from their mistakes. Staff establish good working relationships between themselves and pupils and between pupils. Thus, pupils respond very positively to the relaxed but purposeful atmosphere that is created in class and take an active part in lessons. Satisfactory teaching is characterised by insufficiently high expectations that do not drive the learning at a fast enough rate. Whilst planning is generally satisfactory, learning objectives are not always clear, with the result that the lesson loses focus in parts. Although teachers are aware of pupils' prior attainment, they do not always use the information from assessment to plan work that matches closely the needs of individuals. In addition, the teaching methods used are not always sufficiently varied to match pupils' varied learning styles. Consequently, the tasks planned do not match pupils' needs and learning styles closely enough and they cannot make progress relative to their ability. In contrast, good teaching provides a good level of challenge through very effective and fast-paced questioning that makes pupils think more deeply about the topic at hand, and therefore moves their learning forward at a faster rate. Whilst in the most successful lessons, the teaching is underpinned by sufficient subject knowledge, in some satisfactory lessons, it is not supported by the thorough preparation required to help broaden and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

As a result of the effective focus on reading skills, the majority of pupils make good progress in reading. Their progress in other areas of the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties generally make as much progress as their peers.

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

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as reflected in their good behaviour, positive attitude to learning, self confidence, friendliness and visible well-being. Pupils develop a good spiritual awareness through Qur'anic and Islamic studies, singing *nasheeds* (Islamic songs) in praise of Allah (God) and Prophet Muhammad, and through opportunities for reflection in lessons. They have very inquisitive minds and do not hesitate to ask questions in lessons, with the assurance that they will be answered. They enjoy receiving individual attention in small classes and appreciate having supportive and understanding teachers. At prayer time, they show a sensitive understanding of the solemnity of the occasion and a high level of self discipline. They work and play in harmony with each other and respect each other's views.

The citizenship and Islamic studies programmes give pupils a good understanding of what it means to become a responsible citizen. This is enhanced by interaction with a good range of visitors such as the local mayor. Pupils develop leadership skills through classroom and whole school roles such as becoming 'buddies' to new pupils or leading class assemblies. They make things which they sell at fairs to raise funds for charities. However, there is nothing in place at present to enable them to show more initiative and take on higher responsibilities. This has been noted by some parents and by some of the older pupils.

Pupils develop satisfactory basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, which prepares them fairly well for their future economic well-being. They have many opportunities to work in pairs and in groups and learn useful team work and problem solving skills. The curriculum prepares pupils for life in a multicultural, multi-faith society. However, pupils' opportunities to learn about their own culture and that of others are not as developed as they could be, both in art and in Islamic studies.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

This aspect of the provision is satisfactory. There are appropriate procedures in place to minimise risks in all circumstances and they are implemented adequately. However, the nominated person for child protection and the staff have yet to receive training at the appropriate levels and the relevant policies and procedures have yet to be updated to comply with the latest guidance. The school is successful in creating a happy family atmosphere in which pupils can flourish. They behave well and instances of bullying are very rare. Despite the school's effort to promote high levels of attendance and punctuality, a small minority of parents fail to bring their children on time in the morning or do not always provide notes to explain absences. The admission register does not fully comply with legal requirements as discussed during the inspection.

Most pupils understand what constitutes healthy eating and this is encouraged by the school's guidance on healthy packed lunches and provision of cooked meals with healthy options. Although the school makes satisfactory provision for PE, this is not enhanced by the current arrangements for outdoor play. This has been noted by several parents.

The school has planned well to increase accessibility in conformity with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and needs to draw a further plan to review the possibility of further improving access to its premises and curriculum.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The recruitment procedures have recently been updated to comply with the latest guidance. The school keeps a central register that enables it to monitor easily that all the required checks are carried out before the appointment of all staff is confirmed.

### School's premises and accommodation

The premises provide a pleasant learning environment that includes specialist accommodation. However, most classrooms have already reached full capacity and the present arrangements for outside play are not suitable as discussed during the inspection. The managers are actively looking for alternative premises.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has recently revised its prospectus to provide up-to-date information to parents and others. It has established good links with the local nursery and secondary schools to prepare pupils' transition to the next stage of their education. Apart from three opportunities to meet teachers formally to discuss their children's progress, parents receive detailed annual reports that are of an overall good quality as they show what children can do and cannot do. However, not all teachers' comments state clearly what the pupils' next steps of learning are. Not all parents say they are sufficiently well informed of their children's progress.

### Procedures for handling complaints

There are 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 the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- ensure that information from assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

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))
- maintain an admission register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

- ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils 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:

- provide a rigorous training programme that gives all staff the professional development they need to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged to be able to progress at the fastest rate of which they are capable and give them opportunities to take on responsibilities of a higher order as they move up the school
- continue to improve the creative curriculum
- improve the quality of reporting to parents so that all feel well informed of their children's progress.

## School details

Name of school	Suffah Primary School
DCSF number	313/6072
Unique reference number	134243
Type of school	Muslim day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 2001
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	Boys: 59      Girls: 69      Total: 128
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1      Girls: 0      Total: 1
Annual fees	£2,600 for Reception and £2,400 for pupils aged 5 to 11 years
Address of school	Hounslow Jamia Masjid Wellington Road South Hounslow Middlesex TW4 5HU
Telephone number	0208572 9817
Fax number	0208572 3445
Email address	Suffah.primary@yahoo.co.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Humaira Saleem
Proprietor	Hounslow Jamia Masjid and Islamic Centre
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Dates of inspection	28-29 November 2007