

Jaamiatul Imaam Muhammad Zakaria School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	380/6109
Unique Reference Number	107460
Inspection number	317811
Inspection dates	21 - 22 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Cecile Corfield

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

Jaamiatul Imaam Muhammad Zakaria School is an independent boarding school for Muslim girls aged 11 years to post 16 years. The school is situated on a ten acre site in several large buildings. The school is set on a hill overlooking Clayton village on the outskirts of Bradford, West Yorkshire. There are currently 456 girls on roll. No student has a statement of special educational need. No pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties. The school aims to *'ensure that the years spent at Jaamia facilitate students to attain, primarily the highest levels of spiritual, moral and Islamic awareness and, in close conjunction with this, the highest levels of physical and intellectual achievement of which they are capable.'* The school's boarding provision was inspected by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in November 2006. This is the school's second S162a inspection. The first inspection was held in May 2004.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education for its students. It meets all of the regulations. Teaching is good throughout the school. The quality of care is good promoted through comprehensive welfare, health and safety procedures. Students' personal development is outstanding. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good, as it enables students to make good academic, spiritual and personal progress. It is well balanced between a comprehensive *alimah* course (Islamic theology) of traditional Islamic sciences, and National Curriculum subjects. The *alimah* course is a five-year programme that equips students with a deep knowledge of their faith, making it a strength of the provision. A one-year foundation course is offered to students who need to improve their proficiency in Urdu to access the full course. Students take nine subjects at GCSE and are encouraged to take Arabic and Urdu at least one year early. Provision for English literature, science, Arabic and Urdu is very good. Provision for English language and mathematics is good. Provision for information and communications technology (ICT) is satisfactory and the school has rightly identified the need to increase the quantity of computers to promote the use of ICT in all subjects. A GCSE ICT course was introduced this academic year. Students over the age of 16 years take Arabic and Urdu at GCE level and also have courses in Asian dressmaking and cooking. Provision for physical

education is only satisfactory owing to lack of subject expertise and facilities. The Post-16 curriculum has been broadened with the introduction of ICT at AS level.

Planning of the curriculum is satisfactory as it is sufficiently detailed to support teaching. The school has improved the quality of its provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education, which is now good, since the last inspection. The planning of cross-curricular links is now satisfactory and developing. Teachers now identify cross-curricular links in their lessons plans. Resources are generally adequate to teach the curriculum and the school is planning to expand its library.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Lessons are planned carefully and thoroughly, identifying what the students will learn which teachers share with them at the beginning of the lesson. However, lesson plans do not always indicate how further challenge will be provided for the most able students. Teachers make good use of plenary sessions at the end of lessons to check what the students have learned.

The teachers are well-informed, enthusiastic and committed. They successfully convey this enthusiasm to the students, who they know very well, and use this information wisely to plan the activities to be done in lessons. This enables students to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers plan interesting work, providing many opportunities for collaborative work, as seen in several lessons in both the religious and secondary curricula. This encourages students to think for themselves and build upon their previous learning. It also helps prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Students report that teachers help them to learn and make good progress.

The teachers set a good pace to lessons, which start and finish promptly, and the school day runs smoothly. Students know what they will be doing next and get themselves organised. They know they are in school to learn and to work hard; they need little reminding to do so. Staff set high expectations for both work and behaviour and students respond by working hard and behaving exceptionally well. There is a friendly, relaxed, yet purposeful working atmosphere in lessons.

There is good assessment of students' learning. Teachers use effective targeted questions to check if students have understood the lesson. They undertake a range of assessments, including end of unit and year tests and national end of key stage tests. The school has recently improved individual tracking and it can easily identify students who need additional help. However, in some subjects in Key Stage 3 the use of assessment is insufficiently sharp to enable some individuals to progress at the rate of which they are capable. For example, some students who make good progress are capable of outstanding progress.

As a result of the good curriculum and good teaching, students make good progress over time, both in the *alimah* course and National Curriculum subjects. The school's performance in GCSE results has been consistently well above national expectations

in the vast majority of subjects. Students attain very high standards in English literature, science, Arabic and Urdu. They attain high standards in mathematics and English language. A large majority of students achieve 70% of the final examination mark at the end of the *alimah* course. At GCE level, students attain very high standards in Arabic and Urdu.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

This aspect of the provision is outstanding. *'This is a friendly school where you learn to get on with others, have the opportunity to meet girls from different cultural backgrounds, improve your life skills, learn independence and increase your faith.'* is how Year 11 students sum up their experience at the school. Students develop a high level of self confidence and capacity for reflection. Behaviour is outstanding and students demonstrate a high level of self discipline on a daily basis. They show an exceptionally positive attitude to school, as indicated by their good attendance, their willingness to participate in lessons and their visible enjoyment.

Students appreciate the opportunity they have to board with girls of diverse cultural heritages. Their understanding of diversity is further enhanced by learning about the major world religions in social studies. Their cultural awareness is raised by studying textiles, engaging in weekend art activities and taking part in cultural events. They gain a strong sense of community and an insight into the spiritual and social benefits of communal life. They have many opportunities to contribute to school life, for example by performing domestic duties and taking part in *halaqa* (student led study circles) and *anjuman* (assembly) discussions. These discussions also enable them to develop leadership skills. Students contribute to the wider community by raising funds for various charities and, for example, by having their poetry published. They feel very well prepared for the next stage of their lives. They learn about British, European and international institutions through the citizenship programme and have high aspirations for their futures. The students enjoy listening to a range of interesting speakers who visit each term.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is good. There are well understood procedures to ensure students' health and safety outlined in the school's policies. Staff are mindful of potential risks both inside and outside the building and take appropriate steps to minimize these. Supervision of students is good. Students report that they are confident that their teachers will be there to help them with any problems.

Students are developing their own awareness of how to keep safe and make healthy choices. Older students have First Aid, fire and health and safety training. The school places great emphasis on promoting healthy eating by providing a healthy tuck shop, fruit at meal and break times and by reminding parents not to provide unsuitable treats for their girls.

The school has attended to almost all of the recommendations of the CSCI report in November 2006 and in the S162a inspection in 2004. Replacement of worn carpets with non-slip lino in communal areas and carpets in bedrooms is on-going and subject to budgetary restraints, as is redecoration of bedrooms. Eight new bathrooms have been installed. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has carried out conscientiously all required checks on staff before appointment. Details are kept, as required, on a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in Victorian premises built in 1854. The extensive site has several buildings, some used for boarding and others for lessons. The classrooms vary in size and the school has planned for groups with the least students to use the smaller rooms as recommended by the 2004 inspection. The building is well maintained and standards of cleanliness are satisfactory. The school awaits the completion of the new teaching block to provide a gymnasium. A sports field is to be developed to one side of the building.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents with an informative prospectus which meets the regulations. Appropriate annual reports provide details of attainment, effort and progress for both religious studies and the secondary curriculum. The vast majority of parents state that they are satisfied with the information provided, although a few are not. The school is to send out information reminding parents of the facilities available, for example, the Parent Liaison Officer.

Procedures for handling complaints

The policy and procedures for complaints meet requirements and a copy of the policy is included in the prospectus.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

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:

- ensure that lesson plans indicate how further challenge will be provided for the most able students.
- provide more rigorous analysis of attainment in Key Stage 3 to accelerate the progress of all students.
- continue to build up resources and improve specialist facilities especially for ICT and physical education.
- progress with the refurbishment and redecoration of the premises.

School details

Name of school	Jaamiatul Imaam Muhammad Zakaria School
DCSF number	380/6109
Unique reference number	107460
Type of school	Boarding Muslim School
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1992
Age range of students	11-16 years
Gender of students	Girls
Number on roll (full-time students)	456
Number of boarders	456
Annual fees (boarders)	£1,800
Address of school	Thornton View Road Clayton Bradford West Yorkshire BD14 6JX
Telephone number	01274815522
Fax number	01274883696
Headteacher	Mrs Zebunnisa Hajee
Proprietor	Board of Trustees
Reporting inspector	Cecile Corfield AI
Dates of inspection	21-22 February 2008