

Salafi Independent School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	330/6103
Unique Reference Number	133603
Inspection number	320004
Inspection dates	15-16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik 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

Salafi independent school is a Muslim primary day school in Small Heath, Birmingham. It admits boys and girls aged from 6 to 11 years and there are 185 pupils on roll. Most of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Asian or Black origin. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs and none are at the early stages of acquiring English. When pupils enter school in Year 2, boys and girls are taught together. In Years 3 to 6 boys and girls are taught separately by staff of the same gender. At the time of the inspection all of the teachers were unqualified. However, a few have gained degrees or qualifications in teaching in the early years. An Islamic, Arabic and secular curriculum is provided.

The school opened in September 2002 and was known as Madrassah Salafiyyah. Later that year it changed its name to its current one. A board of trustees oversees the school's work. The headteacher is newly in post, although he is not new to the school. Previously he was a class teacher and the numeracy coordinator. He is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. This is the first reported inspection of the school.

The school aims to follow the Salafi creed. That is: *'to ensure children are inspired with a sense of virtue. Our children need to know and believe that sincerity, for the sake of Allaah, honesty, respect, responsibility and courage is the only way for a good Muslim to be. The way to achieve this is by following the example of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), his companions, and the righteous of the generations that followed*

Evaluation of the school

Salafi school is an improving school that provides a satisfactory standard of education. Pupils are happy and enjoy being there. Their behaviour is good. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good. Teaching and the curriculum in Islamic studies, Arabic and secular subjects are satisfactory. The provision enables pupils to make sound progress academically and good progress morally. Assessment information is not being used effectively to plan lessons of consistent quality. Pupils' Islamic spiritual development is a key strength of the school. However, pupils have a very limited understanding of faiths and cultures different from their own. Some health and safety policies are not fully effective. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are inadequate.

Quality of education

The Islamic, Arabic and secular curricula are satisfactory. Provision enables pupils to make adequate progress over time. In the Islamic curriculum pupils study the *Qur'an*, and all learn Arabic notation and the correct pronunciation of the language. This leads to *tajweed* (Qur'anic recitation) and *tahfeez* (memorisation). Study of *hadith* (the traditions of the prophet) covers moral teachings and social life at various levels. Provision also includes *fiqh* (theology), *aqeedah* (basic beliefs from the Qur'an) and *sunnah* (the tradition of the prophet). Islamic history is covered in both the Islamic and secular provision. *Seerah*, in which the life of the prophet and Islamic history are covered, requires further improvement, particularly in Year 3 where the sequencing of work is not yet quite right. The school successfully uses a commercial Arabic scheme which focuses on speaking, listening, reading and writing the language. Pupils are making sound progress learning the *nahw* (syntax) and *tasreef* (morphology) of the language.

The school has a sound curriculum policy. All six areas of learning in the secular curriculum are adequately covered. There are schemes of work for all subjects apart from art and physical education. Planning lacks consistency and its quality is far too variable. Assessment information is not being used effectively to plan work that is consistently challenging. Extra curricular provision is very limited. Pupils and some parents would like to widen the range of activities on offer. Inspectors agree. There are too few opportunities for pupils to visit places of local and national interest and to receive visitors from different walks of life, to widen pupils' perspective on life.

Teaching quality ranges from good to inadequate and is satisfactory overall. Assessment and learning are also satisfactory. Teachers of Islamic studies and Arabic have secure subject knowledge and set work that is generally appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils. They use a mix of suitable teaching methods which ensure pupils make at least satisfactory progress in both subjects. As yet, teachers are not introducing the terminology of *tajweed* in Qur'anic studies in order to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of *qira'ah* (the recitation of the Qur'an). On occasions Arabic and Islamic lessons are too short and this means that pupils' learning is not always fully consolidated.

The strengths in teaching are that adults form very good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. The most effective lessons are characterised by high expectations and challenging work that ensures all pupils are suitably stretched. In the very small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, time is not used well and teaching methods are not fit for purpose. Activities do not reflect or promote the learning objectives set. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress and their interest wanes. Where teaching is satisfactory it is generally because insufficient use is made of assessment information to ensure work is effectively matched to pupils' capabilities. Work is too often pitched at the middle ability group and this means that the less able find activities too difficult and the more able too easy. On occasions, pupils are given unproductive and mundane

activities to do and this means time is not used wisely. In English pupils are spending too much time working through exercises from text books. Pupils are not doing enough free writing across a sufficient range of genres, and most are not writing in a fluent joined style. In mathematics, there is also an over reliance on working from textbooks that focus mainly on calculation activities. Insufficient attention is being devoted to investigative and problem solving work.

In summer 2007, Year 6 pupils were assessed in English and mathematics using national tests which were internally marked. The school is right to extend the use of national assessments into other years to establish pupils' attainment and progress. No baseline assessment is undertaken when pupils enter Year 2, therefore, strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance are not identified. At present the teachers of secular subjects do not have a good enough grasp of pupils' needs and abilities and they therefore have difficulty planning work that is consistently challenging. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. In writing, insufficient attention is being given to improving pupils' spelling, tense and punctuation errors.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school's contribution to their moral development is good.

Pupils' Islamic spiritual development is a key strength of the school. The strong Islamic ethos and the teaching of Arabic ensure that pupils develop a very secure understanding of their Muslim beliefs and customs. The study of the *Qur'an* and taking part in daily prayers with the local community ensures pupils develop a real sense of identity and self-worth as to what it means to be a Muslim in the modern world. In contrast, pupils have a very limited understanding of other religions and cultures different from their own. In the secular curriculum there are too few opportunities for reflection and opportunities are missed to explore awe and wonder in the world at large. Pupils have well developed moral values. Their behaviour is good and they show respect to their teachers, each other and visitors. Pupils co-operate well together and are developing the necessary social and personal skills for adult life. Whilst strong relationships exist in school, pupils have too few contacts with people from the wider community. This restricts their ability to relate and adjust socially to people whose cultures and lifestyles are different from their own. Pupils have made a difference by developing the school's rules. Pupils say that they would like to be more involved in decision-making. Inspectors agree.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Whilst the school has sound arrangements in place to ensure pupils' welfare and health, its procedures to safeguard them are inadequate. Because there is a serious weakness in provision, the overall welfare, health and safety of pupils is judged inadequate.

The school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies are of good quality and are effectively implemented. Pupils say that they are not harassed and if they have a concern it is effectively dealt with. Child protection procedures are adequate. The headteacher, who is the designated person responsible for child protection, has not received training at the required level. There is a written health and safety policy but it is not fully implemented. For example, portable electrical equipment is not tested on a regular basis by a qualified person. There is no written health and safety policy for educational visits. No adequate risk assessments have been undertaken for activities outside school. Risk assessments for the premises are satisfactory. The June 2006 fire officer's report indicates a satisfactory level of fire safety. Fire drills are regular and fire fighting equipment is routinely tested to ensure it is fully operational. Attendance registers are completed satisfactorily. The admission register does not contain all of the required information. For example, the name and address of the last school attended and pupils' gender are not recorded. The school has not drawn up a three-year plan indicating how it will fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school's vetting procedures for staff and members of the board of trustees are inadequate. Not all staff or trustees have been subject to a check by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) at an enhanced level. The school has applied for CRB checks for two newly appointed staff, however, they have started work without a List 99 check being done to confirm their suitability to work with children. The school has recruitment guidelines but they are not robust enough. Before staff are appointed the school carries out appropriate checks to confirm their past employment and references are sought. Identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom and qualification checks are not administered. A single register of all staff is kept but it does not contain all of the required information.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory. The school is located in a former warehouse that has been adequately adapted for educational use. The school shares its premises with a local mosque, however, arrangements for its use are not organised in such a way that the welfare and safety of the pupils is properly safeguarded. Two of the nine classrooms are of insufficient size and are overcrowded. This accommodation restricts pupils' ability to work independently and effectively access resources. There are insufficient boys' and girls' toilets for the numbers on roll. The school does not have suitable facilities for pupils who are ill.

The school is kept in a satisfactory condition. Whilst most of the classrooms do not have windows and no natural light, the artificial lighting is adequate for teaching purposes. The new ventilation system ensures that there is sufficient air circulating throughout the premises. The outside place space is quite small but as its usage is staggered, with only one class using it at any one time, it is adequate.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents and other parties with an information booklet that contains useful detail about the school's ethos and curriculum. However, not all of the required information is supplied. For example, the school's policy on admissions is missing and the school does not make clear that parents and others may request particulars of policies relating to child protection and health and safety. Annual written reports are clear about the standards achieved and the effort made in Islamic, Arabic and secular subjects.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a written complaints procedure but it does not meet all of the regulations. The areas of non-compliance are noted below.

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 appropriate plans are in place for all subjects and schemes of work are produced and implemented for art and physical education (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that lessons are well planned, activities are challenging and class time is used wisely (paragraph 1(3)(c))
- ensure teachers take pupils' needs, aptitudes and prior attainment into account when planning lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- improve marking and ensure assessment information is used effectively to plan teaching so that all pupils make progress according to their capabilities (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:

- ensure that the designated person for child protection receives training at the required level (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- produce and implement a comprehensive policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside school that has regard to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- ensure that all electrical equipment is subject to regular inspection by a qualified person (paragraph 3(4))
- ensure the admission register is maintained in accordance with the regulations (paragraph 3(9)).

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 carry out an appropriate check to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the UK and where appropriate their qualifications (paragraph 4(2)(a))
- ensure that prior to confirmation of their appointment, all staff and others who work in school, have been subject to a check with the CRB, or list 99, to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(2)(b))
- ensure that the chair of the board of trustees has carried out a CRB check on all board members and appropriate checks are made to confirm their identity and right to work in the UK and the outcomes are recorded in a register (paragraph 4B(4 and 5))
- ensure that the register records for each member of staff in post on or after 1 August 2007 the checks made (and certificates obtained where relevant) of their identity, qualifications (where required); whether an enhanced CRB was obtained and where appropriate establish an individual's right to work in the UK to ensure the person is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (paragraph 4C(2 and 3))
- ensure that the register records for each member of the board of trustees in post on or after 1 August 2007 the checks made of their identity, whether an enhanced CRB was obtained and where appropriate establish an individual's right to work in the U.K. to ensure the person is not working in contravention of section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (paragraph 4C (6 and 7)).

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

- ensure that the premises are organised in such a way that the welfare and safety of pupils is safeguarded (paragraph 5(e))
- ensure all classrooms are of an appropriate size and none are overcrowded (paragraph 5(j))
- ensure there are sufficient toilets for boys and girls (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents and parents of prospective pupils are provided with particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- ensure that parents and parents of prospective pupils are provided with particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f))

- ensure that parents and parents of prospective pupils are aware that they may request particulars of policies relating to child protection and health and safety (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- ensure that parents and parents of prospective pupils are aware that they may request particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- ensure that parents and parents of prospective pupils are aware that they may request details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedures during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- ensure that parents and parents of prospective pupils are aware that they may request details of the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for one person on the panel to be independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g))
- ensure that that the procedure allows for parents to be accompanied, if they wish, to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(h))
- ensure that the panel findings and recommendations are provided to the complainant, chair of trustees and headteacher, and where relevant, the person complained about (paragraph 7(i))
- ensure that the procedure provides for written records to be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing (paragraph 7(j))
- ensure that the procedure provides for correspondence, statements and records of complaints are kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

School details

Name of school	Salafi Independent School		
DCSF number	330/6103		
Unique reference number	133603		
Type of school	Primary Muslim School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2002		
Age range of pupils	6-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 97	Girls: 88	Total: 185
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,550		
Address of school	472 Coventry Road		
	Birmingham		
	West Midlands		
	B10 9SN		
Telephone number	0121 772 4567		
Email address	salafischool@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Cooper		
Proprietor	Mr Abu Khadeejah Abdul Wahid		
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI		
Dates of inspection	15-16 January 2008		