

# Islamiyah School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	8896007
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Inspection dates	5-6 March 2008
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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## 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

Islamiyah School is an independent school for Muslim girls aged between 11 and 16 years. It opened in September 2000 in the Little Harwood district of Blackburn and it was registered in 2003. There are 248 students on roll, mainly of Pakistani and Indian heritages, and many travel from neighbouring towns. Most students are either bilingual or at various advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. There are no students with a statement of special educational need. The school teaches most National Curriculum subjects along with Arabic, Urdu and Islamic studies. It seeks to provide a high standard of Islamic and secular education. Its mission statement is, *'When you educate a girl, you educate a nation.'* It aims to *'encourage discipline and pleasure in learning in a supportive atmosphere, so as to enable each student to reach her own personal best; to encourage young girls to pursue worthwhile careers, which will make them economically independent and socially integrate into the wider community and develop into responsible citizens.'* This is the school's first published report.

## Evaluation of the school

Islamiyah School provides a good quality of education and a satisfactory level of care. It meets its aims fully, and parents and students express a high level of satisfaction with its academic achievements. The school is led by an experienced and dedicated headteacher, assisted by committed senior teachers and subject teachers, and by a new team of supportive governors. The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation reflects its capacity to improve further. The school complies with most of the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced in Key Stage 3 and a little narrower in Key Stage 4 where there are few opportunities for creative learning. Its main strength is that it provides sufficient flexibility to meet the needs and interests of all students. The less academic students can opt for the computer literacy and information technology examination (CLAIT) in Year 10 and a short course in religious education (RE) and science. The more academic students can take the full GCSE course in information and communication technology (ICT), geography and RE and the double award examination in science. The gifted students can take the triple

science examination. Students take up to 11 subjects at GCSE level. They take their examination in geography, short course ICT, RE and Urdu in Year 10, which gives them time to focus on other subjects in Year 11. The school is seeking to broaden its provision further with the introduction of vocational and practical courses. The planning of the curriculum is satisfactory in all subjects. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) reflects the ethos of the school. Provision for RE and Urdu is very good. Provision for English, mathematics, science, ICT, citizenship, geography is good. However, ICT is used in a few subjects only. Provision for art is satisfactory; however, the subject is not yet developed to its full scope. There are sufficient resources to teach the curriculum and the school is committed to building them up.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall, and assessment is mainly satisfactory. Where the teaching is outstanding, the lesson is conducted at a brisk pace, based on expert subject knowledge and excellent preparation that lend great confidence to the teaching style; it assesses students' understanding thoroughly and responds to their needs fast to enable them to progress at a very good rate; it plans tasks that provide consistent challenge for students of all abilities. Where the teaching is good, it is based on planning that matches individual student's needs closely. However, this is not always achieved sufficiently closely within the same ability sets. Good teaching makes effective use of praise to encourage the more reticent students to take part. It provides good opportunities to develop collaborative skills and to promote a good standard of literacy and oracy. Where the teaching is satisfactory, the questioning is insufficiently effective to enable students to arrive at a deep understanding of the topic and the range of teaching methods is restricted by the seating arrangement. Occasionally, the homework given involves finishing a class task rather than extending learning. There is a wide range of assessments to test students' learning and the progress of individual students is monitored effectively. Students know how to improve through constructive feedback and, in some subjects, through helpful marking. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent; the setting of learning targets is limited to Key Stage 4 students and targets are not always subject-specific and sufficiently precise to give students a clear picture of their next learning step.

As a direct result of the good curriculum and the good teaching, most students make good progress over time, in relation to their starting points. Most make very good progress in Key Stage 3. The school's overall performance in the GCSE examinations has been higher than most schools nationally in the last three years. Students achieve best in RE and in Urdu. The school has correctly identified why a minority of Key Stage 4 students do not make as much progress as expected and is addressing the issue.

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

Provision for students' personal development is good, as reflected in their good behaviour, their good attendance and the individual qualities they develop whilst at school. The vast majority of students say they enjoy their education. When asked

what they like best about their school, they say '*Helpful teachers who never tire to explain the work*' and '*The opportunity to be ourselves.*' They add that they are conscious of the importance of their future roles as young British Muslim women, as expressed in the school's motto, '*When you educate a girl, you educate a nation.*' Students are confident, articulate, friendly, spontaneous and very polite. They form positive relationships. In discussion, they show maturity in their ability to present a balanced argument. However, a small minority does not have the expected level of self-discipline.

The school works hard to prepare students well for their future economic well-being and raise their aspirations. Students acquire good basic skills in academic subjects, teamwork, problem-solving and communication. Provision for careers education is good, and consequently, most students choose to further their education. Those who start their working lives early follow a 'preparation for a working life' curriculum through which they learn essential practical skills, such as how to write a curriculum vitae and prepare for an interview.

Through the RE curriculum, students learn about their own faith and the main world religions, in a way that promotes respect and social harmony. Their cultural awareness is enhanced by a few educational visits and activities. For example, they benefit from a funded programme aimed at raising their awareness of health issues through drama and art. Year 9 students presented a piece on the importance of vitamin D with great confidence and competence in assembly. However, some parents feel, rightly, that there is an insufficient range of educational activities, including trips. Students develop a good understanding of British public institutions and of their roles as responsible British citizens through the citizenship programme. Year 8 students have contributed to the community by making a digital presentation on drug abuse which is used in other schools by the local substance abuse counsellor. The students' council enables all students to contribute to school life, for example by improving the school uniform. However, some students feel ready to take on responsibilities of a higher order.

## Welfare, health and safety of the students

Whilst the day-to-day care of students is good, the wider aspect of the provision is satisfactory. All the essential policies aimed at safeguarding students and minimising risks throughout the school day are in place. However, the nominated person for child protection has not yet received the appropriate level of training. All staff received first aid training and accidents are recorded conscientiously. The behaviour policy is implemented consistently. Consequently, instances of bullying are rare and students feel safe and develop a good understanding of personal safety. The implementation of the health and safety policy is satisfactory, as areas of responsibility have recently been clarified. Fire drills are recorded appropriately. A new fire alarm system was installed during the inspection and a fire safety report was compiled that highlights issues to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The school promotes healthy lifestyles effectively through the curriculum and links with health agencies. Students are encouraged to drink water and eat fruit, even during certain lessons. Although there are opportunities for physical exercise, some students and parents feel that these are insufficient. The school had already identified this need and plans to introduce extra physical activities in the near future.

The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The governing body reviewed the recruitment procedures last summer and ensures that all the required checks are carried out on staff prior to confirmation of their appointment. The school maintains a single central register that records all the checks made.

### School's premises and accommodation

The premises provide adequate teaching space but some areas are in need of renovation in order to meet health and safety requirements. The first phase of a refurbishment programme has provided a spacious ICT suite and three larger classrooms. However, the washing facilities are insufficient for the number of students on roll, and leaks in the ceiling of two rooms need attention. There are plans in hand to address these issues in the next phase of refurbishment scheduled for July 2008. Although the present cleaning arrangements ensure that most areas of the school are kept in a satisfactory condition of cleanliness and hygiene, the playground is swept infrequently.

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

There is a good range of up-to-date information for parents and others. Parents have at least two annual opportunities for formal meetings with their daughters' teachers. They receive two reports that give them a detailed picture of their daughters' progress. However, not all teachers' comments indicate clearly what the student can do, cannot do and needs to do to improve.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school has suitable procedures for handling complaints fairly and promptly.

### 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 Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- show that it has a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and by any report from the Fire Authority (paragraph 3(5)).

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

- ensure that all areas of the school do not compromise health or safety by addressing the issues highlighted in the report (paragraph 5(j))
- provide sufficient washing facilities for all students, including facilities for students with special needs, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k))
- ensure that classrooms and other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state (paragraph 5(n)).

## 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:

- improve the provision for art and design and technology, and extend it to Key Stage 4
- provide a wider range of educational visits and activities
- involve students more closely in assessment by increasing the frequency of useful marking and setting precise learning targets in each subject
- improve the standard of reporting to parents.

## School details

Name of school	Islamiyah School
DCSF number	889/6007
Unique reference number	132749
Type of school	Day Muslim school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 2000
Age range of students	11-16 years
Gender of students	Girls
Number on roll	248
Annual fees	£900
Address of school	Willow Street Little Harwood Blackburn Lancashire BB1 5NQ
Telephone number	01254 661259
Fax number	01254 661259
Email address	<a href="mailto:z.seedat@blackburnmail.com">z.seedat@blackburnmail.com</a>
Headteacher	Mrs Zarina Seedat
Proprietor	Masjid-e-Sajedeen
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Dates of inspection	5-6 March 2008