

# Al-Muntada Islamic School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	205/6382
Unique Reference Number	100372
Inspection number	320337
Inspection dates	14-15 January 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

Al-Muntada Islamic School is an independent primary school for boys and girls aged between four and eleven years, located in the Parsons Green area of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. It was founded in 1989 by the Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust that also opened a secondary school, Eden High, in Hammersmith, in 2003. There are 168 pupils of diverse heritages on roll. Admission is by entrance test and interview. The vast majority of pupils are either bilingual or at advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. There are no pupils with a statement of educational need. The school aims to *'provide its pupils with an Islamic environment where they receive a well balanced and high standard of elementary education and gain knowledge of their deen (religious way of life).'* By creating a strong Islamic ethos, it seeks to *'develop in children good moral values and character ... and help them become active and responsible young people within their community and outside.'* The school was last inspected in 2002.

## Evaluation of the school

Parents who send their children to Al-Muntada Islamic School are overwhelmingly positive about it, and rightly so, as the school meets its aims and provides a good quality of education. Although the overall provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory, the day-to-day care of pupils is good. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection, led by a headteacher who has a clear vision and a cohesive and dedicated team of staff. The accuracy of its self-evaluation reflects its capacity to make further improvements. The school complies with most of the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It achieves a good balance of subjects that enables pupils to acquire a wide knowledge base and develop a wide range of skills whilst gaining a good understanding of the Islamic way of life. It teaches all the National Curriculum subjects, except for music, with a deliberate emphasis on literacy. The Islamic curriculum includes Islamic beliefs and manners, early Islamic history and Qur'anic studies, as well as an overview of the major world religions. In the Reception class, the curriculum follows the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 guidance. Subjects are planned in sufficient detail to support the teaching effectively. English, mathematics,

science, Islamic studies and Arabic are strengths of the provision. Reading skills, independent and creative writing are taught well. However, handwriting and presentational skills are not taught to the same high standard. Pupils develop good skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Although teachers plan cross-curricular links to make learning more meaningful and increase the use of ICT across the curriculum, there are missed opportunities to develop literacy in Islamic studies. Provision for physical education (PE) and art and design and technology is satisfactory. There are adequate resources to teach the curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by a fairly good range of educational visits and the school plans worthwhile extra-curricular activities that do not require daily use of the premises since these are used by other parties after school hours.

Teaching and assessment are good, assessment in English and mathematics being a particular strength. There are very effective systems in place to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is monitored frequently and thoroughly and that the information provided by assessments, evaluations and lesson observations is used to inform the planning of future work and the professional development of staff. The progress of individual pupils is tracked very rigorously in all aspects of English and mathematics. It is not tracked with the same rigour in other subjects, which the school has identified as an area for improvement. Pupils gain a clear understanding of how to improve through constructive verbal and written feedback. They also have learning targets in English and mathematics.

Teachers have established good working relationships in their classes, generally plan their lessons well, work in close partnership with the classroom assistants and use the available resources appropriately. They ask probing questions that motivate pupils and promote their analytical and problem-solving skills. Consequently, pupils develop an excellent attitude to learning and work productively by themselves, in pairs or in groups. Good teaching is characterised by expert subject knowledge, a wide range of methods that matches pupils' various learning styles and engages them in active learning, and challenging tasks that stretch all pupils. Where the teaching is outstanding, it is dynamic and fosters enthusiasm for the topic, it promotes creativity and provides a consistently high level of challenge that empowers pupils to excel. Where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the tasks do not match the needs of individual pupils sufficiently closely. Occasionally, the teaching is weaker where time is not used wisely.

As a result of the good curriculum and good teaching and assessment, pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils achieve better in mathematics and science than in English. Almost all pupils in the Reception class are expected to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the summer term and about one quarter are expected to exceed them. Pupils achieve very highly in the national tests, in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2.

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as reflected in pupils' good attendance, good behaviour and excellent attitude to learning. Pupils are happy, thoughtful and polite, and most are confident. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on helping them develop a strong Islamic identity, a good moral character and a wide range of basic skills to prepare them well for the next stage of their education, their future economic well-being and life in a multicultural society.

Pupils gain a good insight into Islam as a way of life through the Islamic curriculum, daily congregational prayers and assemblies. However, the current management of assemblies does not provide sufficient time to enhance pupils' spiritual development. As they move up the school, pupils also learn about the major world religions and are taught to appreciate the similarities and differences between them in a respectful way. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced effectively by educational visits and several areas of the curriculum.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship programme ensures that pupils acquire general knowledge of public institutions and services, environmental and global issues. It clearly reflects the Islamic ethos of the school. Pupils are encouraged to develop the qualities of responsible and active citizens. They enjoy showing their love for poetry and drama by contributing to public performances and role play in class. Frequent project work enables them to develop good research and ICT skills. The good quality of the magazine produced by Year 6 pupils reflects a high level of initiative, a clear understanding of what interests others, a strong sense of aesthetics and excellent team work. The school runs schemes to develop the older pupils' enterprise skills. Pupils raise funds for charities. In every class, there are opportunities for contributing to school life and developing a sense of responsibility.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Whilst this aspect of the provision is generally satisfactory, the day-to-day care of pupils is good. There are suitable policies and procedures in place to minimise risks in various circumstances. All staff have received first aid training. The behaviour policy is implemented consistently and instances of bullying are very rare. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning in an orderly environment and feel safe. However, the nominated person for child protection and the staff have not yet received the appropriate level of training and the relevant policies have not yet been updated.

Pupils develop a good awareness of healthy lifestyles through Islamic studies, PSHE and science. Healthy eating is supported effectively by the school's ban on fizzy drinks and crisps and the provision of good quality meals in the canteen. Pupils' opportunities for physical exercise are limited outside of PE lessons. Whilst the school

provides climbing frames for children of Reception age in the PE hall, there are few interesting physical activities for the other pupils who use the playground at break times.

The trustees have devised a three-year accessibility plan that complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The recruitment procedures have recently been reviewed to comply with the latest guidance. The school has compiled a central register that has highlighted gaps in the implementation of the procedures as detailed at the end of this report. It must ensure that all the personnel files are updated.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed at the back of an Islamic centre. Whilst the teaching accommodation is self-contained, the use of the premises outside school hours imposes restrictions. Classrooms are of a good size and there is a new ICT suite and a PE hall. The small size of the playground is managed as well as possible through staggered play time. An extensive refurbishment programme is under way and major works are carried out during school holidays. The ceiling is in need of urgent repair in a toilet area and in the ICT suite.

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

There is a wide range of information available. The school prospectus has recently been updated. Parents are informed weekly of their children's homework and are invited to liaise with teachers. However, not all parents make use of this vital link with the school. Parents are invited to meet their children's teachers three times a year and receive three detailed progress reports that are of a good quality.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school has suitable procedures to ensure that complaints are handled promptly and fairly.

### 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)).

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, ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and ensure that such information has been taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

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

- carry out repairs as a matter of urgency to ensure that all areas of the school do not compromise health or safety (paragraph 5(j)).

## 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 systems to track the progress of individual pupils more rigorously in subjects other than English and mathematics
- develop cross-curricular links further
- improve pupils' handwriting and presentation of work.

## School details

Name of school	Al-Muntada Islamic School
DCSF number	205/6382
Unique reference number	100372
Type of school	Muslim day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 1989
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	Boys: 84      Girls: 84      Total: 168
Annual fees	£2,500.00
Telephone number	0207 471 8283
Fax number	0207 736 4255
Email address	muntadaschool@yahoo.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr Ziad Chehimi
Proprietor	Al-Muntada Al-Islami Trust
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Dates of inspection	14-15 January 2008