

Tawhid Boys' School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	204/6407
Unique Reference Number	132736
Inspection number	320390
Inspection dates	19-20 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

Tawhid Boys' School is an independent Muslim school for boys between the ages of 10 and 16 years. It opened in September 2000 in a residential part of Stoke Newington, in the London Borough of Hackney. There are now 128 students on roll and the school has plans in hand to expand its premises in the near future. Students come from the local area and beyond and are of diverse cultural heritages. All are either bilingual or at various advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. There are no students with a statement of educational need. The school teaches most subjects of the National Curriculum, with the addition of Arabic and Islamic studies. It gives the highest priority to *'the achievement of excellence, the notion that education extends beyond the 'purely academic,' with students being encouraged to develop real Islamic moral values and practise Islamic etiquette in their daily lives.'*

Evaluation of the school

Tawhid Boys' School provides a good quality of education and meets its aims. Students' very high academic achievements owe much to the dedication of their teachers, the very effective leadership of the headteacher and senior managers, and the support of the governing body. Staff do their best to minimise the negative impact of cramped accommodation and, whilst the provision for welfare, health and safety is satisfactory, the day-to-day care of students is good. The accuracy of the school's self evaluation reflects its capacity to make further improvements. The school complies with all but two of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good, enabling most students to acquire good basic skills, to progress and develop well. It is broad and balanced in Key Stages 2 and 3. In Key Stage 4, students take 10 subjects to GCSE level and, additionally, the school has recently introduced the GCSE citizenship course; however, students have limited opportunities for creative work and there is no choice of optional subjects. The school has identified the need to provide flexibility in Key Stage 4 to meet more closely the needs of all students. Across the key stages, the school places a great emphasis on high quality planning and regular monitoring and review of the curriculum. Consequently, the schemes of work are sufficiently detailed to support

the teaching and they are adapted to meet the diverse needs of students. The needs of students identified as having learning difficulties are met satisfactorily through individualised planning. Most subjects, including physical education (PE) are taught by specialists. These features are strengths of the curriculum. As a result, provision for English, mathematics, science and religious education (RE) is very good. Provision for business studies and information and communication technology (ICT) is good. Resources are adequate to teach the curriculum. The school has invested in interactive white boards that are used effectively in some subjects to engage students in learning. Provision for PE is good and includes swimming, cycling, canoeing, indoor basket ball and football skills. Provision for art in Key Stages 2 and 3 is satisfactory as the subject has not yet developed to its full scope. The programme of personal, social and health education reflects the Islamic ethos of the school. The development of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. However, there are missed opportunities to promote students' speaking skills.

Teaching and assessment are good. The headteacher leads by example and monitors the quality of teaching and learning very effectively. Teachers share an understanding of what constitutes effective learning and improve their practice through a programme of continuous professional development. Good teaching ensures that the lessons are conducted at a brisk pace that focuses students' attention on learning, that a variety of methods keeps them engaged actively in learning and that challenging questioning forces them to apply intellectual effort. Outstanding teaching is dynamic; it groups students very effectively for various tasks and provides consistent challenge for all. Satisfactory teaching is not always based on sufficiently high expectations and so does not stretch students to their full capacities. The introduction of lessons is often too long and lacks focus, and so students cannot sustain their attention. When the teacher's talking dominates the lesson, students become passive learners. Sometimes, the tasks match the needs of students approximately. In such cases, students engage in low level disruption and cannot progress at the rate of which they are capable. There is a framework to assess students' learning regularly and thoroughly and to monitor their individual progress effectively. The school has begun to implement strategies to involve students more actively in assessment. Students know exactly how to improve through constructive verbal feedback and through helpful marking. In some subjects, they receive learning targets that help them move their learning on. However, this practice is not yet generalised and the quality of marking varies in some foundation subjects.

As a result of the good curriculum and good quality teaching, most students, including those who have learning difficulties, make good progress over time. The school's performance in the national tests and examinations has improved significantly over the last three years. The 2007 GCSE results indicate that students achieved very highly in English, mathematics, science and RE. They achieved highly in business studies and ICT.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The school's provision for students' personal development is good. Most students are happy and enjoy their education, as reflected in their good attendance and satisfactory behaviour. When asked what they like best about their school, Year 11 students reply, *'having dedicated teachers who push us to achieve as highly as possible.'* They also appreciate being educated in an Islamic environment in which they can deepen their knowledge of their faith and feel free from bullying. Students' spiritual development is promoted effectively through the many opportunities for prayer and reflection, through building confidence and self esteem as they develop their Muslim identities. Knowledge of Islamic teachings, the good role models provided by staff, the insistence on high standards of behaviour and the good management of behaviour in most lessons contribute very effectively to students' moral development. This is enhanced by visits and links to the police through the leadership programme. Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being through the provision of good basic skills and good careers education. Consequently, most choose to further their education.

The school places a great emphasis on citizenship and students have many worthwhile opportunities to contribute to the school and local communities, which enhances their knowledge of British public institutions. The very active students' council has been successful in providing a new bicycle rack, a shelter area, outdoor seating, air conditioning, and in raising funds for a minibus. Students show a strong commitment to conservation of the environment by walking or cycling to school and presenting ideas for recycling, for which they have gained external recognition. Their awareness of diversity is promoted particularly through RE where they learn about the major world faiths. They gain a practical understanding of diversity through such initiatives as the 'alif-aleph' programme that links Muslim and Jewish schools. However, there is an insufficient range of educational visits to enhance students' cultural development.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

Whilst this aspect of the provision is satisfactory overall, the day-to-day care of students is good. The school works hard to promote students' well-being and enjoyment, and minimise the limitations imposed by small premises. Students develop a good understanding and commitment to healthy lifestyles through the curriculum. Their physical development is promoted very well through PE and extra-curricular activities. However, the lack of indoor and outdoor space limits the range of physical activities available at break times, which has been noted by some parents and students. Students' commitment to being healthy is further promoted by the provision of unlimited access to water, healthier alternatives to fizzy drinks in the tuck shop and encouragement to eat fruit.

All the essential policies aimed at safeguarding students and minimising risks are in place and most are implemented rigorously. Consequently, students feel safe and well cared for. However, there is a perception among a minority of parents and

students that some staff do not treat all students fairly, a concern which the school is already addressing. The school does not hesitate to apply serious sanctions to deal with persistent bad behaviour and it deals with bullying effectively. In the face of the challenging behaviour of a minority of students, it has identified programmes that aim to promote students' emotional well-being. However, it has not implemented them yet, so that behaviour overall is satisfactory and the rate of exclusions is high. Registers are maintained satisfactorily and reveal a low level of unauthorised absence but a minority of students arriving late in school. Although the school pursues lack of punctuality with vigour, the students concerned and their parents have, as yet, failed to respond to these efforts.

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

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has effective procedures to carry out all the required checks on staff to determine their suitability to work with children. It maintains a single central register that enables it to monitor the implementation of these procedures.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are well maintained and decorated. Although they have been enlarged to provide specialist rooms, the teaching accommodation is very compact. All rooms have reached full capacity and, in one classroom there is not sufficient space to allow for effective teaching. The current arrangements for students who are ill are inadequate as the school office is very busy and there is no sink. Staggered play time, adequate provision for indoor activities and vigilant supervision ensure that students can play safely outside.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

A wide range of information is provided mainly through an up-to-date website, a prospectus and handbooks. Parents have two annual opportunities for formal meetings with their sons' teachers. They receive an interim and an annual report that provide a satisfactory summary of their sons' progress. However, not all teachers' comments are subject-specific or show clearly what the student must do to improve. Consequently, not all parents feel sufficiently well informed of their sons' progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

There are suitable procedures in place 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 the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- have regard to the number, age and needs (including any special needs) of students and ensure that all classrooms are appropriate in size to allow effective teaching (paragraph 5(j))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

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:

- share the best practice in marking and involve students more in assessment to give them an accurate picture of what to do to improve in all subjects
- develop further literacy across the curriculum and the use of ICT in all subjects
- broaden the strategies used to improve behaviour
- improve reporting to parents.

School details

Name of school	Tawhid Boys' School
DCSF number	204/6407
Unique reference number	132736
Type of school	Muslim day primary and secondary school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 2000
Age range of students	10-16 years
Gender of students	Boys
Number on roll	128
Annual fees	£2,200
Address of school	21 Cazenove Road London N16 6PA
Telephone number	0208 806 2999
Fax number	0208 806 2999
Email address	umapara@tawhid.org.uk
Headteacher	Mr Usman Mapara
Proprietor	Mr Abdul Ghani Alibhai (Tawhid Educational Trust)
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Dates of inspection	19-20 March 2008